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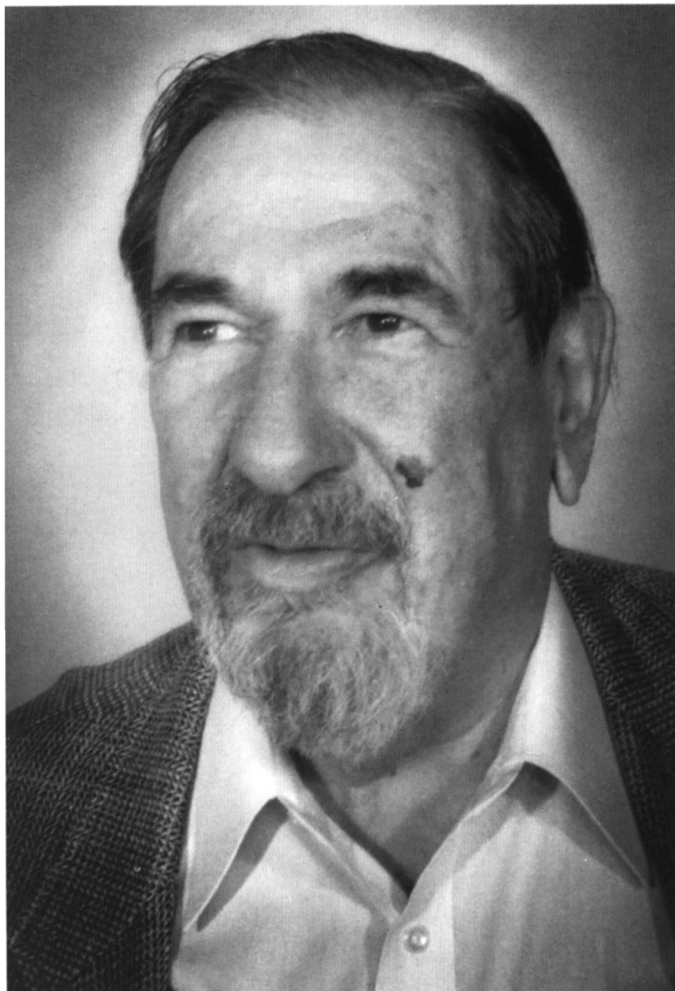
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VOLUME 91





Richard H. Popkin, who celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday on
27 December 1998

EVERYTHING CONNECTS: IN CONFERENCE WITH RICHARD H. POPKIN

Essays in His Honor

EDITED BY

JAMES E. FORCE

AND

DAVID S. KATZ



BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN
1999

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is also available.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Everything connects : in conference with Richard H. Popkin ;
essays in his honor / ed. by James E. Force and David S. Katz. – Leiden ;
Boston ; Köln : Brill, 1999
(Brill's studies in intellectual history ; Vol. 91)
ISBN 90-04-11098-4

ISSN 0920-8607
ISBN 90 04 11098 4

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

DAVID S. KATZ

There is an old Jewish joke about the man who is found wailing at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, weeping for the loss of his friend. "How could you have known him?" asks the onlooker, "this Soldier is supposed to be Unknown". "It's true," explains the mourner, "that as a Soldier he was Unknown; but as a tailor, he was world-famous!" I bring forward this ancient testimony in order to justify the publication of a third Festschrift for Richard Popkin, produced by some of the editors of the first and second volumes, respectively. Those books were a tribute to Richard H. Popkin the scholar, the greatest living historian of philosophy. The collection before you is a testimony to Dick Popkin the conference-meister, not the soldier on the frontiers of knowledge, but the man who for many years created tailor-made gatherings of scholars from all over the world.

Academic conferences have long suffered from a serious image problem. Arthur Koestler referred to professors as "call girls"—one ring of the telephone and their bags are picked for any destination between Berkeley and Beijing. In David Lodge's very small world, meetings of this kind serve the essential function of providing a venue for them to rubbish their colleagues before a distinguished international audience. This sort of amusing cynicism, coupled with the humiliating difficulty of trying to get funding for travel in some universities, and the automatic ease of obtaining airline tickets in others, has led to a general uneasiness about the value of academic conferences in general. When entire academic papers can be sent along telephone lines almost instantly, who needs to bring the actual authors together at the public expense?

Dick Popkin always knew the answer, and to anyone who was lucky enough to be invited to what he sometimes called his "clam bakes", the reasons were so obvious that it never needed to be formulated. Dick actually believes that there is such a thing as a "Republic of Letters", an international group of scholars who collectively are bringing light into darkness and uncovering the hidden connections and correspondences between history and ideas. It would

be difficult to find an appropriate metaphor for Dick Popkin's role in bringing these people together—the sun, the summit of a mountain, the top of the tower—but it is undeniable even without literary support that scholars from all over the known world turn to him for advice and even encouragement, and he sees to it that they meet.

We will probably never be sure if history is science or literature or a little bit of both. Certainly there are many literary elements in history writing, as the postmodernists never tire of taunting us, with everything from the use of language and imagination to the construction of reality. But it is also a science as well, most importantly in the post-Newtonian sense of being *public*. The early founders of the Royal Society saw themselves as the representatives of men like themselves, who due to geographical dispersion could not always be present at their deliberations. It was therefore necessary ultimately to conduct their experiments as public demonstrations before what amounted to a group of witnesses whose task it was to testify to the results. Science was public.

Dick Popkin's historical science has also always been public. On the personal level, he makes his work available to other scholars the moment it exists. I recall meeting him in various places in Europe when he would plunk down a stack of manila files on the table and say, "this is what I've found recently", sending me off with his blessing to photocopy whatever I liked. In this case at least, virtue was its own reward. When Dick's car was mysteriously broken into at Paris in 1986, the thieves taking nothing valuable apart from a case full of his papers, he was able to reconstruct most of his lost work by asking his friends for photocopies of the photocopies.

Most importantly, however, Dick Popkin's historical science has always been conducted in the public sphere by means of academic conferences of fellow scholars. David Lodge is right that far too often, the academic conference is a venue for the pursuit of agenda other than that on the programme itself. Popkin's conferences are never like that. For one thing, rather than inviting stars whose research fuel has long been exhausted, Dick always prefers researchers who genuinely have something to contribute, even if they are only at the early stages of writing their doctoral thesis. A number of articles in this present volume were contributed by scholars who first met Dick Popkin while graduate students, sometimes having pursued him to Washington University or UCLA, but also including others who were adopted informally at the beginning of their careers.

Historical research is by its very nature often a solitary affair. We work mostly with books and manuscripts, shrouded by the dulled sounds of the library. Such dialectical synthesis that occurs takes place at a relatively advanced stage of the research, after the finished book or article is published. There are many fields of study in which the collaborative effort comprises the research itself, as in a scientific experiment involving many people and masses of equipment. The benefits of discussion, argument and counter-argument on a regular and even daily basis are largely lost on the silent archival warriors.

Dick Popkin saw the darkness and said it was no good. With the support of institutions like the Clark Library (UCLA), the Van Leer Institute (Israel), the Herzog August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel), and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies, and the generosity of a patron like Constance Blackwell, Dick began to put together conferences on his favourite themes—scepticism, religion and irreligion, millenarianism, and the no-man’s-land between Christianity and Judaism. The people he brought together always provided the critical mass required for intellectual forward movement at warp speed, and very many of them formed lasting scholarly and personal friendships.

Dr. Susanna Åkerman, now a distinguished scholar, but once a graduate student who journeyed from Stockholm to study in America with Richard Popkin, recalls the advice he gave her early on in her research: “Everything connects in the end”. The editors of this third volume of essays have therefore chosen as its motto Dick Popkin’s dictum that “everything connects”, for thanks to him, not only ideas but also scholars have made contact. They like to think of themselves as “Popkinites”, united by a common belief that the history of philosophy involves discovering and uncovering unnoticed connections between ideas and those who held them, and that largely based on new and original research in the primary materials left behind.

Everyone in this volume apart from myself has contributed an essay and a set of personal remembrances. My own tribute to Dick Popkin comes in the form of a book we are publishing together at the same time as this Festschrift, *Messianic Revolution: Radical Religious Politics to the End of the Second Millennium* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999). Our aim in this book was to show the connections (that word again!) between Joachim of Fiore in twelfth-century Italy and David Koresh in twentieth-century America, to give a history

to the notion of millenarian radicalism and violence. In both its scope and its discussion of modern American Fundamentalism, it is in many ways vintage Popkin.

As for personal remembrances, I met Dick Popkin for the first time in the 'seventies. Dick used to come to Israel to teach at Tel-Aviv University during spring term in those years, and I remember that he used to claim that by the time the 'nineties rolled around, he'd be "watching the cars go by". This prediction proved to be wildly wrong. I think it would probably be embarrassing for both of us if I tried to describe the influence Dick Popkin has had on my life and work. Instead, I join with Jim Force in presenting to him this volume of essays by some of his "conferees", in the hope of cadging invitations for many more years to come.

INTRODUCTION

Warts and All, Part 2

When Washington University in St. Louis set up a program based on a grant from the Mellon Foundation to encourage some professors to take early retirement, I rushed over to apply. On the basis of this programme I saw that I could devote much more time to research, travel and writing. I was the second applicant. Based on the assurances of the Provost, Julie and I began considering where to make our base for the years to come. I would have happily considered London, Amsterdam or Paris. I wanted to be somewhere where I could have access to large library collections, and somewhere from which I could travel hither and yon. Julie wanted to be somewhere where there was no winter. We decided that Los Angeles would meet both of our needs. I could use the UCLA Library, the Clark, the Huntington, the USC Library among others, and then go to Europe when I needed special materials. We had summered in Pacific Palisades in 1984 and found a condominium that met our needs, and was within walking distance of all sorts of stores and facilities. It was on a bus line to UCLA, so we did not need two cars. We moved in at the end of the summer of 1985. I still had to finish one more term at Washington University before I could begin collecting my pension. So we went back for one last semester, and then settled down here. (We have lived in our present condominium longer than we have lived anywhere else during our married life.)

There was a brief flurry of excitement before I could commence my early retirement. A new dean at Washington University at the time saw this program of early retirement as a way of forcing the retirement of so-called dead wood amongst the faculty. When the papers for my retirement got on his desk, he apparently rebelled. I was not the sort of person they wanted out of the way. He told the then chairperson, Richard "Red" Watson, NO, absolutely NO. The very day this happened the Popkins were leaving from a semester at Tel Aviv University. I was flying to London to take part in a conference at the Jewish Historical Society, commenting on a

presentation by Sarah Kochav. Julie was taking the boat from Haifa to Athens in order to get our rental car on its way back to Paris. I was to meet her in Athens in a few days. We started out for the Ben Gurion Airport, and on the way realized that we had left my neckties in the apartment. Since there was enough time, we went back and found our landlord holding a cabled message, reading "Call St. Louis immediately." It was signed by Watson. We were alarmed but realized it was the middle of the night in St. Louis, so I told Julie I would call Watson when I got to London in a few hours. Julie and the Renault were on board the *Sol Phryne* sailing from Haifa, to Cyprus and Athens. When I got to London it was still too early in St. Louis to make a call. I took a nap, and was awakened by Julie calling from Cyprus. An announcement had come over the loudspeaker system on the boat while she was watching a movie—"Juliet Popkin report to the top deck." There the radio officer had the same message from Watson—"Call St. Louis immediately." She worried that something disastrous had happened to a member of the family, and tried to use the ship's radio to call our younger daughter in Chicago, who at first could not comprehend the ship's identification and refused to accept the call. Sue knew nothing about any emergency! A couple of hours later I reached Watson from a phone booth at Russell Square, and learned that the new Dean was refusing to permit me to retire early. Furious, I sent off a letter explaining that the matter had already been settled by the Provost, that we had sold our home in St. Louis and had acquired one in Pacific Palisades. If the Dean did not want to honor the Provost's actions, I would resign and sue. Watson tells me the Dean was angry but gave in not too gracefully.

I did my conference duty in London and flew to join Julie in Athens. She was ensconced in the Holiday Inn, a much more luxurious lodging than we were used to abroad. From there we took the car on a ferry to Italy and then drove across western Europe to Paris. Unbeknownst to us, a gigantic jazz extravaganza was taking place in Paris, and none of our usual lodgings had a room. The travel bureau in Strasbourg told us we could have a room in a newly opened Novatel at Les Halles. We drove through the worst of rush hour traffic into Paris to find the hotel. Right next to the hotel was the new complex of Les Halles which had lots of underground parking. We were supposed to return the car the next day, so we decided to take only what we needed for the night to our hotel room.

The next morning when we went to the car, we found the car's

trunk had been opened. A number of bags were missing, especially one large heavy bag that contained all the notes and working materials from my research during this trip abroad, and all the materials I had brought with me. It was devastating. When we pulled ourselves together, we struggled over to the Police Department a block away. A very nice detective took our case in hand, and told us first that we must have seen the sign on the garage wall that the City of Paris was not responsible for anything left there. Second, any responsible person would have known that one does not park on the side of Les Halles where we did, but on the other side by the church. We were told (a) that there was no chance of recovering the stolen items, (b) that the robbers were surely not French, but rather Chileans, (c) they were after drugs not scholarly research and (d) that we were lucky to be alive because in our country, the good old U.S.A., we would have been killed. The only hope the detective said was that the drug seeking robber would be so disgusted with his loot that he might dump it on the steps of a police station or municipal waste basket.

For days afterwards I was in shock. Of course, nothing turned up. Fortunately, I realized I had shown some of the material to various scholars in Europe and Israel: some of them had copied various items. A student we met in Amsterdam turned out to have detailed notes of a talk I had given at the beginning of the tour in Leiden. Gradually I reconstructed some of what I had lost, and resigned myself to getting along without the rest. We returned to the U.S. and flew out to Los Angeles to move into our new home in Pacific Palisades. I asked David Kaplan, then chair of the Philosophy Department at UCLA, if I could have some "official" status so I could use the library and the men's room. David immediately said, "We'll make you an Adjunct Professor, and maybe you could give a course for us". So I became part of the UCLA faculty, and taught a few times in the Philosophy Department. Later on, Amos Funkenstein and Robert Westman insisted that I also be made an Adjunct Professor of History. And I taught a bit for them as well. My base became the basement of the Clark Library where I had an office, and a place for carrying on research.

For the spring semester I returned to St. Louis to finish up my commitments there.

At the end of the semester, I had to be operated on for a prostate condition that fortunately turned out to be benign. We were scheduled to spend a month during the summer at the great library at

Wolfenbüttel in Lower Saxony. Our departure kept being postponed as my recovery took longer than expected. Finally we flew to Brussels, picked up a rental car and drove to The Netherlands and to Germany. Because of the delays in our arrival, proper housing was not available when we got to Wolfenbüttel. Finally after a few difficult days, we became residents atop a schloss that belonged to the local banker's family. Actually it was the servants' quarters, but all to ourselves, which gave us quite a bit of room, a lovely view, but a great many stairs to climb up and down. During the month I gathered new material for my various researches in the history of philosophy and Jewish intellectual history. Much of this material appeared in articles published over the next few years.

On returning to the United States, I began a decade of conferencing, as participant, as organizer, as editor and publisher thereof. This proved to be invaluable for me as a way of exploring ideas with others, of interesting others in various areas of research that concerned me, and in making the results of this available to the scholarly world.

All through my academic career I had attended conferences, usually professional ones like those of the American Philosophical Association, (often described as "meat-markets" or "flesh-Markets", where professors were "bought or sold"). These became larger and larger over the years, with less and less time for intimate contact and intellectual discussion.

Some of us felt, with reason, that very little attention was given to the history of philosophy on the programmes. For a while I found some compensation in more interdisciplinary conferences of the Renaissance Society and the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. I helped organize little sessions in the latter on racism in the Enlightenment, on Condorcet, and other such topics. But soon both of these societies also grew into monster gatherings that could only be held in large hotels.

The conference as a crucial part of academic life had mushroomed in the post-war years. I surmise that this was inspired by the specialized scientific conferences our scientific colleagues were going to almost weekly, theirs financed by various governmental agencies. The frantic pace of "conferencing" has been brilliantly satirized in David Lodge's *Small World*. The scientific conference world had been "justified" by the need to exchange ideas, and results, as soon as possible. In the humanities such haste was not thought necessary. One

could exchange ideas by mail, by leisurely publications, by personal visits. However in post World War II U.S., the non-scientists succeeded in getting governmental encouragement and financing for conferences. Conference centers, like the Humanities Center in North Carolina, were established. Monies became available in the U.S., as well as in Europe, to celebrate the birthdays, the death days, the dates of publications, etc., of famous and infamous philosophers. [The first international conference I ever attended was an Irish wake for Bishop Berkeley held in Dublin in 1953, on the 200th-anniversary of his passing. Prime Minister De Valera attended one session, and declared that Berkeley was a great mathematician, a great philosopher, a great economist, but the greatest thing about Berkeley was that Berkeley loved the Irish! Then we were invited by the President of the Irish Republic to get wildly drunk at the Phoenix House. In 1994, during a nice small conference, which I will discuss later on, a more recent President, Mary Robinson, invited the delegates and offered us tea, coffee and cookies.]

Over the years in the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's, I was invited to a number of conferences, large and small, mainly in Europe, to discuss Pierre Gassendi, Pierre Bayle, and many many others.

These get-togethers were sometimes very worthwhile in terms of the exchange of ideas, the intellectual friendships established, and the publications that resulted. Sometimes they deteriorated into tourism, and eating and drinking bouts.

I had little input into planning most of these conferences, since usually I was just a happy guest participant. It was mainly as a result of my year as William Andrews Clark Professor at UCLA in 1981–82 that I became a conference organizer, as almost a full time job. The Clark Professor was supposed to organize a series of eight lectures on a specialized theme, and to invite learned scholars from all over the world to participate. My theme was *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought* in the 17th- and 18th-centuries. Each lecture, spaced about a month apart, was followed by an elegant reception for the audience in the lovely grounds of the Clark Library, one of the unknown jewels of Los Angeles. This was followed by a party sponsored by the Clark Professor, usually at my home, where a gathering of interested people could get together, interact with the speaker, and have an informal conference while wining and dining. We had speakers as diverse as Christopher Hill from Oxford, Amos Funkenstein of UCLA, Margaret Jacob, then at The New School

and Henry Louis Gates then at Yale. [I think Gates's appearance effectively desegregated the Clark Library.] A great deal of intellectual bonding took place in the intense atmosphere of the talks, the receptions and the parties. In retrospect, I can see that the success of that year, which has led to a lot more interest and scholarship about Messianism and Millenarianism in modern thought, involved fine speakers presenting exciting papers, a delightful setting, and adequate funds to finance the receptions and parties. All one needed were effective, interesting speakers and audiences that enjoyed listening and interacting. There was intellectual profit and much good humor. The Clark Library also had visiting fellows who took part in the conferences, and continued the discussions throughout the year. It was fortunate for me, and for the theme of the year, that Jim Force, John Rogers and Richard Kroll were there almost every day, working on different aspects of 17th-century English thought. This made the whole academic year into a continuing conference. I have described in *Warts and All* how this heady interaction of ideas, outlooks and friendly discussion culminated (for me) in my developing my theme of the Third Force in 17th-century philosophy, which has bred a continuing exciting research programme concerning scepticism, spiritualism and Judaism and philo-semitism, from Savonarola to the end of the 18th-century.

As a result of the Clark year, Julie and I decided to settle down in Los Angeles when I retired. The Clark seemed an ideal venue for my research, and the conferences provided new intellectual excitement. However, in the post-Clark year, I really got my start as a conferencier. In December 1982, I was invited to take part in a conference on Dutch Jewish History in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. It was a grand affair with experts on history, literature, economics, philosophy, theology, and and . . . Papers followed one upon another making comprehension fairly difficult. The social events were delightful since the Dutch government had generously helped to make the conference memorable in terms of bringing together so many people who worked in the area, so many Dutch-Israelis and so many Dutch well-wishers.

One of the papers on Menasseh ben Israel led to a group of us vigorously complaining. In our complaints we realized that so much new information and understanding of Menasseh's role had occurred that it would be a very good thing to bring together the specialists to share their findings and outlooks. Good. But how, for if we were

to bring together people from America, Europe and Israel, it would involve fairly great financial backing. I asked Yehuda Elkana, the then director of the Van Leer Foundation in Jerusalem, if he could help. The Van Leer Foundation was presenting many kinds of conferences under Elkana's direction. He told me he would finance it, if I and my friends would design the programme.

I learned two important points about being a conferencier. One needed financing, and one had to operate with and in a social and political context. I organized a program committee. We agreed on a list of invitees. But we were told that we had to invite X, Y and Z because of various concerns among Israeli academicians. And we should not invite A, B, or C, because of existing rivalries and animosities amongst academics in America and Europe.

The end result was a most interesting conference featuring those working on new materials and new interpretations of Menasseh ben Israel's activities and influences, but also a display of all the kinds of conference features that form the background of David Lodge's *Small World*. We had rivalries, we had cliques, we had confrontations and a sexual frisson or two. But, unlike David Lodge's conferences, ours actually had real meat. The published version of the papers has become an important volume for the study of aspects of 17th-century intellectual history. What for me has always been a most important feature and result of conferences was the intellectual and social bonding of some of the participants which has carried over for more than a decade.

I had tried to make "the conference" more productive for the exchange of ideas by urging (requiring?) that participants submit drafts of their papers prior to the conference, so that others could read them, and prepare comments for discussion. The results then, and since, have varied. Some people actually prepared a paper for the conference, with a topic definitely in line with the expectations of the conference organizers, and then, as I hoped, used the interchanges at the conference as a basis for refining their papers for publication. Others just submitted a sketch of their papers, and wrote them up after the conference. And at least one participant was writing his or her paper on the plane, and finishing it in the hallway as the conference started. It was at the Menasseh conference that I gave the first version of my paper on "The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Indian Theory", showing how European attempts to account for the existence of peoples in the Americas led to the view that

they must be part of the Lost Tribes of Israel. Menasseh ben Israel caused a great deal of excitement when in his *Hope of Israel* (1650) he reported that a Portuguese explorer in South America said he had found an Indian tribe engaging in Jewish practices on a Friday night. Menasseh's account was used and elaborated on well into the 19th-century. However, President Thomas Jefferson after completing the Louisiana Purchase, consulted with former President John Adams, and they agreed that the Jewish Indian theory was bunk, and that therefore it was all right for the European Americans to take over their lands. Another aspect of conferencing emerged almost from the start, that of the very important role of the chairperson of each meeting. At the very first session a very prominent professor, not a participant in the conference, "asked" the first question, which was a forceful speech, full of learned information and assertions, not really related to the paper that had preceded it. The person who had delivered the paper, appearing at his first international conference, was stunned. It became obvious that chairing, in order to promote exchanges of ideas, required tact, diplomacy, and force when necessary. One had to balance encouraging participation by people looking at the material in different ways, with containing the participation within reasonable bounds of time and subjects. When a questioner says, as one did when I gave a paper on La Peyrère and the pre-Adamite theory, I would like to raise just sixteen points, a chairperson has to step in before the whole discussion has been pre-empted. And the chairperson must, with good humor, prevent the discussion from becoming just a dialogue between two persons, the speaker and a questioner.

Another aspect of the David Lodge fashion of conferencing showed itself very slightly at the Menasseh gathering, namely attending conferences as a way of projecting one's worth and place in the academic world. This is, I think, more true of American conferenciers, partly due to the logistics and expense of conference attending. Europeans by and large can attend many nearby conferences on the cheap, going by train.

In 1984, the late Charles B. Schmidt and I had organized and run a conference at the great library center at Wolfenbüttel in Lower Saxony on *Scepticism from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*. We brought together a small group of scholars working on various aspects of the history of modern scepticism. It was my first experience trying to run an international conference in several languages. Fortunately in

the small group almost everyone could understand English, French and German. Papers were given in whichever of the three languages the speaker wished, and the discussion went on trilingually. There was always someone who could translate whenever intercultural confusion set in.

Wolfenbüttel is a well-organized conference center, so all the participants have to do is come, present their papers, and join in the discussions. The Wolfenbüttel pattern of conference is well-designed in terms of pace. After a paper or two there is a "Pauze", a lengthy coffee break in which more informal discussion can go on. And because Wolfenbüttel is a small city in Lower Saxony with little attraction except for the great library, the conferees are also drawn together in their hotels, and in their meals and recreation. So, a rich intellectual feast can occur there. Because of that experience, in 1984, I decided, with Jan van den Berg and Ernestine van der Wall of Leiden, after we had been at the Menasseh ben Israel affair in Israel, to try to hold a further conference on some of the Millenarian themes that had been discussed at Wolfenbüttel, which we did in the fall of 1987.

In September 1986, I was a participant in an international Spinoza conference in Chicago organized by Dan Garber and Ed Curley. It brought together some of the best Spinoza scholars from Europe, Israel and America. However, because of my evolving theory as a conference organizer, I felt that one was too intense. There were too many papers, not enough time for formal and informal discussion. It was fine in terms of bringing together such a broad group, and in terms of intellectual interchanges in English, French and German, with a bit of Italian as well. My own paper was on Spinoza and the Three Impostors, which I thought included some important news about Spinoza's relationship to the seventeenth century excitement about whether (a) Moses, Jesus and Mohammed were impostors, and (b) whether anyone had written such a book, putting forth the evidence. [The first printed version from the early 18th-century is entitled, *Les Trois Imposteurs, ou l'esprit de M. Spinoza*.] Unfortunately I was put on the programme in a small stuffy room late in the afternoon. Just before me, Yuri Yovel from Jerusalem was more or less presenting his book, *Spinoza and other Heretics*, which was just coming out at the time. He spoke interminably, leaving no time for my paper. People had to vote on whether I should give a quick summary, or squeeze the paper in another day. I did the former, and I think the

paper, as part of the conference, was lost in the maze or haze of Yovel's paper. However the theme of my paper became of central importance for a later event, the Leiden seminar of 1990 on the Three Impostors. [I should mention that my iconoclastic views about Spinoza, his relationship with Dutch millenarians, with the Quakers, and other themes, brought me into close contact with a group of young French Spinoza scholars, Pierre-Francois Moreau, Jacqueline Lagrée and Francois Charles-Daubert. Some of my wilder explorations were translated by them into French and published in French journals.]

After the Chicago Spinoza conference, I went to Los Angeles to begin my "retirement" by researching and writing about various topics that interested me in the history of scepticism, and religious history, Jewish and Christian in early modern times. Sadly one of the first conferences I had to attend in my retirement was one organized by Sarah Hutton and John Henry at the Warburg Institute in London in memory of my close friend and fellow researcher in the history of scepticism, Charles B. Schmidt, who had died suddenly in April 1986. Charles had done fundamental research in Renaissance thought and institutions, had encouraged many other scholars, and had created a network of interested researchers all over Europe and America. A fitting memorial conference involved bringing together as many as possible of his friends, and co-workers.

The memorial conference took place at the Warburg Institute in London, February 20–21, 1987. My own contribution was a discussion of a line of inquiry Schmitt and I had been working on, namely, how, why and when scepticism moved from being a support of religious positions in the Catholic and Protestant worlds to being a means of attacking religious belief, and especially that of Judeo-Christianity. Charles and I had been planning to have an international gathering to discuss this. Before his death we had prepared a tentative list of possible participants.

My contribution at the memorial conference was to show that a line of Jewish criticisms of Christian theological claims grew from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. In several further papers I traced in detail how the Jewish anti-Christian arguments proposed in Bodin's *Colloquium Heptaplomeres*, in Isaac ben Troki's *The Faith Strengthened*, and in the arguments of the Jewish thinkers in Amsterdam in the 17th-century, contributed to Enlightenment critiques of Christian religion. This is still a continuing interest and concern to me, and I have gotten others involved in researching this as well.

During the rest of 1987, I was involved in several more conferences mainly as a participant and a little bit as organizer. In April 1987, a large scale conference was held at the Clark Library on Latitudinarianism, organized by Richard Kroll with much discussion and assistance from the late Richard Ashcroft and myself. This conference grew out of the year of Millenarian activities of 1981–2 at the Clark. Kroll was determined to bring together a broad range of scholars in history, literature, history of science, history of religion, and history of philosophy. Kroll's master plan required far more financial support than the Clark could muster, so he decided to apply to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a substantial grant. Since neither he nor I was a member of the regular staff at UCLA, Ashcraft was induced to be the actual applicant. Over a period of at least a couple of years Kroll tracked us down all over the planet to confer about the latest developments, who should be invited, who should replace whom, etc. He was relentless, and finally got the NEH grant, and the conference.

Since much new work had been done on the thought, the politics, and the role of Latitudinarian thinkers in the Restoration period and later, we invited a wide range of scholars to participate. However, almost from the beginning an acrimonious pall was cast over the proceedings. Instead of gentle cheerful thoughtful scholarly exchanges of views and information, the conference quickly became a contest of perspectives and insults. I had no previous reasons to expect this kind of nasty atmosphere, and I tried my best, especially in my keynote address at our banquet, to plead for toleration of others, one of the alleged accomplishments of the Latitudinarians. But for some, the bad taste has lingered on. I would meet participants years later in the British Library still grousing about what X or Y had said about them, or implied or. . . .

A couple of months later in 1987, I participated in a conference, marking the tercentenary of the publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia*, held at the University of Nijmegen in June, 9–12 1987. It was a fairly large gathering, mainly of scholars from the Netherlands but also including five Americans including the late Betty Jo Dobbs, I. Bernard Cohen, Dale Christiansen, Mordecai Feingold and myself. Although it was fairly early in my career as a Newton scholar, I gave a seminal paper (for myself at least) on "Newton's Biblical Theology and his Theological Physics", suggesting what Jim Force has shown more deeply, that Newton's Biblical theology, contained

in the wealth of Yahuda papers in Jerusalem, plus some elsewhere, is related to his physics, at least in the way Newton presented it. It might be best, I suggested, that we ask not why did such a great scientist dabble in theology, but why did such a great Bible theologian dabble in physics? At the conference I had a good chance to have several lengthy informal talks with Betty Jo Dobbs about what Newton might really have been up to, and about the possibilities, still not yet realized, of publishing the vast corpus of alchemical and theological manuscripts. I also had the opportunity to discuss religious interests with Guy Debroack of Nijmegen, and found that though we came from very different backgrounds, we shared some basic concerns.

A few weeks later a conference on Chiliasm was held at Wolfenbüttel in June 1987. I had helped plan this along with my friends, Jan van den Berg, and Ernestine van der Wall of Leiden. With the cooperation of Herzog August Bibliothek, we brought together a dozen scholars from America, England, The Netherlands, Israel and Germany, to deal with a variety of forms and developments of Chiliasm. The conference was held in a beautiful room facing a wall of ancient volumes from the library collection. The director of conferences at the Herzog August Bibliothek was adamant about not having any audience at the conference—just the dozen participants. My former student and colleague, Red Watson, was at Wolfenbüttel at the time, and calmly walked into the conference room, The director blocked his way, and it took a good deal of international diplomacy before Watson was allowed to sit in a corner, after promising not to say a word. This encounter made me realize the values, positive and negative, of an audience. The conferees realize that somebody besides themselves cares, or has opinions on the subject. The audience can range from well-informed, as in Watson's case, to uninformed but eager to understand, to belligerent opponents. It is the role of a good chairperson to assess the audience participation and encourage or discourage it, but not, I believe, to ban it.

A further complication at the Wolfenbüttel affair was that we, the organizers, had hoped that a multilingual discussion could go on, in which people gave their papers in their own languages, and discussion would follow in English or German or both. However, what happened in fact, was the conference split into a German and an English half, with practically no linguistic mixing. This unfortunately led to most of the informal contacts also being mainly English or

German, with some overlap from the Dutch participants who were easily fluent in both languages. The topics discussed, later published in *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, also pretty much divided between English-Dutch ones, and German ones. I gave a paper on John Dury's last work, the Apocalypse explained by itself, which I had found a year earlier in the Herzog August Bibliothek. Pierre Bayle thought the work must be crazy but could not find a copy, and began to doubt that it actually existed. Previous biographers of Dury had not been able to find it. It was written and published in Kassel in 1676, and is the last work by him. I tracked it down through the publication catalogue in Wolfenbüttel, and found the work listed as by Jean Duré. It is Dury's final effort to provide a "scientific method" for finding truth and certainty in Scripture.

At the time we were at Wolfenbüttel, an elegant edition of *Spinoza's Earliest Publication?*, appeared. I had discovered the document it was based on in the Friends House in London, and with the help of Michael Signer had edited it, and offered reasons for believing Spinoza was the translator. The Conference director at Wolfenbüttel, Martin Niewohner, was outraged at the idea that Spinoza would have translated a Quaker pamphlet, and wrote a furious review for *Studia Spinoziana*. Just recently Warren Harvey of Hebrew University has been interested in the character of the Hebrew. Last year he told me that the translator had to be somebody who was well versed in the late medieval Hebrew philosophy of Albo, Crescas and Abarbanel, and that Spinoza seemed to be the only person in Amsterdam at the time who knew these writers. Further analysis has led Harvey to disclaim Spinoza's authorship on the grounds that there are too many grammatical errors in the Hebrew, and Spinoza was a stickler for the purity of the language. Perhaps, as he and I have speculated, the translation is partly by Spinoza and was then reworked by a Quaker, perhaps Samuel Fisher, whose Hebrew was much more limited.

When we left Wolfenbüttel, Julie and I travelled with David Katz to Heathrow Airport, where we could go together to the next conference (shades of David Lodge indeed!) at Cambridge. To facilitate getting there, we hired a Hertz car, on condition that David would drive it. The Popkins were, and still are, too chicken to drive in England. I still have a vision of catastrophe the first time a left turn has to be made. David easily got us to the Cambridge Arms hotel, and left the Hertz in the carpark. We then enjoyed the conference,

until the moment of truth came. How do we get rid of the damn car? David had already left town. We called Hertz, and they told us they were a couple of miles away with several left turns en route. We threatened to abandon the car in the Cambridge Arms car park, until the Hertz people agreed to send someone to get it.

The conference at Cambridge was sponsored by the relatively new British Society for the History of Philosophy, and was organized by Sarah Hutton. It was held at Christ College to celebrate or remember the three hundredth anniversary of the death of its fellow, Henry More, the leading Cambridge Platonist. It had a stellar list of participants, mainly from the United Kingdom, plus an Australian, an Italian and two Americans. Participants could be housed in Christ College, where rooms were available cheaply since school was not in session. Meals were served in the college, and there was use of the facilities before, during and after the meetings.

This was the first of several conferences I attended in rapid succession, sponsored by the British Society for the History of Philosophy. I was with them for a conference on Malebranche, another on Hobbes, and still another on scepticism. The sort of gathering that the British Society could put together, I realized, was not yet possible in the United States. Why? Most of the participants could come by short train rides. The cost of food and lodging was small. And the conference as such was important to the participants because of the hostility of British philosophy departments generally to historical studies in philosophy. The gatherings gave them group support for what they were doing. They were not part of, nor drowned in, larger professional meetings, but were clearly meetings each on significant historical areas of interest in philosophy. The Cambridge meeting on Henry More, subsequently published by Sarah Hutton and Robert Crocker, has helped greatly in bringing More back into the mainstream of 17th-century thought. My own contribution was a paper on the spiritual cosmologies of More and Lady Anne Conway.

At the meeting Cecil Courtney of Christ College told me that June of 1988 would be the tricentenary of the death of another great Cambridge Platonist, the Regius Professor of Hebrew, Ralph Cudworth. It was not felt that Cudworth deserved a full-fledged conference, but people at Cambridge wanted to know if I would come back and give a talk about his ideas. I was flabbergasted. I had been working on Henry More in terms of his philosophy, theology, his anti-

scepticism and his interests in the Kabbalah. But Cudworth, I knew little about. I had looked at some unpublished material about the book of Daniel in the British Library. I knew Cudworth was involved in the discussions under Cromwell about the readmission of the Jews to England. I knew he had bought an anti-Christian manuscript from Menasseh ben Israel, and was outraged by its contents. And Cudworth had written against scepticism. So, I told Dr. Courtney that I could offer a talk on either Cudworth and the Jews, or Cudworth on scepticism, or both. However, I told him that there were plenty of people in Cambridge who knew much more than I would ever know about Cudworth. He insisted they wanted to hear me. So, I was forced into intensive reading of Cudworth's massive unfinished *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* and other works. This resulted in my realizing, and writing on the "crisis of polytheism" in the 17th-century, when thinkers realized the extent of polytheistic beliefs in ancient times and continued to do so in modern times. I saw Cudworth in the same world as Gerard Vossius of Leiden, who had written enormously on the origins of Gentile Theology (a work much used by Isaac Newton), of Herbert of Cherbury, of his colleague Isaac Newton, and of the early deists. By the time I arrived at the invitation of Christ and Emmanuel Colleges to give the lecture, Cudworth had become a significant figure in my picture of the dynamics of 17th-century intellectual history. The Cudworth lecture was duly delivered albeit during a terrible rain storm that rocked the chapel at Emmanuel College where the event was held, followed by an elegant dinner hosted by the masters of Christ and Emmanuel, and attended by Quentin Skinner and Susan James, and Peter Burke and his new wife. It was, as the Brits would say, a splendid affair. I stayed a few days longer examining some of Newton's library at Trinity College, and the manuscript Latin translation of the Mishna done by Rabbi Abendana in the late 17th-century, and supervised by Cudworth. I was anxious to see how much Newton had used the volumes of Maimonides and Gerard Vossius. They were well worn, with lots of fold markings of pages that interested Newton. This buttressed claims I was making in my writings on Newton and Maimonides, and on Newton's debt to Vossius.

In 1988 I participated in two conferences in celebration of the 400th-birthday of Thomas Hobbes in Oxford and in Buenos Aires, gave my Cudworth lecture, and participated in a National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar at Brown University organized by Dan

Garber of Chicago. John Rogers of Keele University, whom I first met in the 1981–82 Clark year, organized a celebration of Hobbes at his college at Oxford under the auspices of the British Society. It was here that I began to realize serious difficulties in climbing stairs, walking long distances, etc. My emphysema was starting to show its debilitating effects. Rogers and his wife Jo kindly arranged to put me in a ground floor room at the college, but I still had to contend with stairs in order to get to meals and lectures. My days had to be organized to reduce the number of stair-climbing episodes. The conference was very good. I was happy to find scholars who were finding clues that connected Hobbes with the French sceptics. I gave a second paper on Hobbes and scepticism emphasizing these connections.

On returning from Europe, Julie and I drove up to Providence to participate in the NEH seminar organized by Dan Garber. It consisted of some very bright advanced students, beginning teachers, and a series of seasoned veterans like myself giving lectures and arguing with everyone. The sessions could be quite heated and exciting. At the conference I met José Raimond Maia Neto, a member of the seminar, for the first time, and spent much time discussing scepticism with him, and narrowing down a topic to be his dissertation study. He had come to Washington University to study with me only to find that I had already retired and moved to California.

Providence is on hills. I could not walk from our lodgings up to where we met, nor could I climb stairs in the various buildings we used. So, the seminar became a real physical trial for me. We stayed two weeks. I was surprised at how stimulating the sessions were as well as the informal contacts with speakers, some old friends like Alan Gabbey and Marjorie Grene, and with the seminarians. I felt, however, that there was no continuous thread from session to session, and no particular goal that I could discern for the participants.

In September of 1988, I made my first visit to South America, invited by my late, dear friend, Ezequiel de Olaso of Buenos Aires. We had first met in 1966 when he was working on his doctorate in the U.S. with José Ferrater-Mora on Leibniz and scepticism. Olaso had found a few manuscript pages by Leibniz, notes about Sextus Empiricus. He wanted me to work with him on this. Unfortunately I could not decipher the text. At the time I was engulfed by administrative problems at the University of California San Diego. So, he worked on the matter alone, and developed a brilliant analysis of

Leibniz's views on scepticism. We kept in touch, exchanged our writings and each became great fans of the others' work. Then, our correspondence ceased during the period of the Argentine junta. From reports of the grim events in Argentina, I assumed he was in trouble with the authorities. When the junta was overthrown, I heard from him, and he turned up again in the U.S. We greedily resumed our intellectual exchanges. We had been together at the Pan American Philosophical Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico. I brought him into my activities, and had invited him to the Wolfenbüttel conference on scepticism in 1985.

Although Argentina under the new democratic regime of Raul Alfonsín was very poor, Olaso arranged for a smallish conference about Hobbes, with two gringos, and scholars from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Peru, Chile and Argentina. I met some delightful historians of philosophy. Olaso tried to distribute everybody's contributions in Spanish and English so we could discuss them. It worked fairly well. I was most impressed by the fact that genuine bilingual dialogue was taking place, since everyone knew enough of the other's language, and with help could keep up a flow of ideas and communication.

I was even more impressed when Olaso whisked me off to their private center for the history of ideas. It was a house in which during the junta they had each deposited their libraries, exchanged ideas, and wrote, even if they could not then publish. It was a philosophical island of resistance to tyranny.

And before leaving Argentina, I also have to say, as an ardent carnivore, I was awestruck by the national diet, *bife de chirozo*, and other forms of steak. From the first meal in a restaurant near our hotel, where the menu was dozens of pages of steak in various forms, with various supplements, plus a page or so for chicken or fish, I was delighted to indulge my carnivorous cravings to their fullest.

Some friends I made there later invited me to Mexico and Puerto Rico. On leaving Buenos Aires, I went to Rio de Janeiro, where I had been invited to give a lecture at the Pontifical University, and where the family of my last graduate student, José Raimund Maia Neto, lived. Buenos Aires looked like a large European city on its uppers. Rio was a tropical paradise, with fantastic views, fantastic beaches, fantastic mountains, and civic dangers almost everywhere.

My *History of Scepticism* had been translated into Spanish earlier, and published in Mexico. Everyone I met in Argentina had read it.

In Brazil there has been an ongoing project to translate Sextus Empiricus and Richard Popkin into Portuguese. Colloquia and seminars are held on various aspects of the history of scepticism. It is likely that some of the future's most exciting research in the field will emerge from Brazil, especially from the work of Maia Neto, his associates and students.

It should also be mentioned that Prof. Racioneiro of the University of Alcalá in Spain has undertaken a large project, to edit the medieval and Renaissance Latin manuscripts of Sextus that are in Spain (the earliest are in Madrid), to translate all of Sextus into Spanish, and to examine the history of scepticism in terms of Spanish rather than Italian or French developments. He held a large conference on this last year which, for health reasons, I could not attend. I think it is important to see traces of the revival of ancient scepticism first in Spain before anywhere else in Europe, and possibly to link this with the intellectual crises occurring in late 15th-century Spain with the Conquest of Granada, the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain, the development of anti-Trinitarianism in Spain, and the development of anti-rationalist Spanish mysticism.

Returning from Brazil, I stopped in El Salvador to meet my recently arrived third grandson, Joel Damian. He was one month old when I first saw him crying in his mother's arms at the airport in El Salvador. Our older daughter had been working as the Deputy Director of the Institute for Human Rights at the University of Central America, a Jesuit institution. To get to El Salvador I had change planes at Panama City in the middle of the night. The then ruler, General Manuel Noriega, got his revenge on American policy towards him by requiring that all Americans had to purchase entry visas for Panama, at \$15 a person, then enter, and immediately turn around and go into the dismal waiting room for a few hours. Others could do as they liked. We finally got to El Salvador in the morning, and, from the luggage searches, realized immediately we were in a war zone.

I got a sense of the struggle going on from various aid and human rights workers I was introduced to, (some of whom were listening to the World Series on old radios). I went with Maggi to the U.S. Embassy to register Joel Damian. A nasty clerk challenged Maggi to prove that the baby in her arms was her child. Many kidnappings or unregistered adoptions were taking place. So the clerk wanted a letter from the doctor who had delivered the baby, footprints to

check with hospital records, affidavits, etc. It also turned out that little Jennifer Cassolo, who became notorious later on when arrested and charged with helping the FLMN by hiding guns in her backyard, had actually filmed the birth by Caesarian section. A large group of friends and well-wishers had been at the hospital as well as the events that followed thereafter. The U.S. Embassy's scepticism evaporated very quickly, but my daughter was much offended by the questioning of her motherhood.

It was the Jesuits with whom my daughter worked who were slaughtered later on. I talked to one, who happens to be the only survivor of the group because he was abroad at the time, and learned much about liberation theology, and its relation to the history of millenarian theology from Joachim de Fiore and Antonio de Viera onward.

When Americans learned I was about to leave for the U.S., I quickly became a volunteer mailman. Nobody had any confidence in the secrecy or reliability of the Salvadoran postal system, so people kept coming up to me to the moment of departure with letters to be mailed in the Miami airport. I ended up with a couple of large shopping bags of mail.

Later on in 1988, I went to London to one more conference, held at the rebuilt Dutch 18th-century church, in commemoration of William of Orange's arrival in Britain. We dealt with toleration and related matters. The setting was most interesting in the center of the old financial City of London, far from where the participants were housed. There was a tendency for the speakers to disperse in all directions so that there was not much of the informal interchange I was used to.

There was an episode when a very confident speaker told us that the Huguenots in London played no role in the Puritan Revolution or the Cromwell regime, and regaled us with the royalist sympathies of a host of leading Huguenots of the time. I asked him how the Rev. Jean Baptiste Stoupe fitted in his thesis, since he was part of the Hartlib circle, and was an adviser and spy for Cromwell. He expressed great doubt that there ever was such a person, or if there was, that he was a Huguenot. Fortunately David Katz and someone else there joined with me in pointing out that the Rev. Stoupe was in charge of the French Reformed Church in Soho (which the speaker had not investigated), and had all sorts of connections with Puritan activists and with Cromwell. I hope the speaker revised his neat

thesis as a result. Someone there told me of a new manuscript which had just been deposited at the British Library, another version of the Bishop Gilbert Burnet's *The History of our Times*. I rushed over, and found this manuscript contained great details of what Rev. Stouppe had told Bishop Burnet of his conversations with Oliver Cromwell about Millenarian events to come. So, by serendipity, I was able to add an important item to my own picture of what was going on. (Stouppe is an interesting figure who gets little attention. He moved from being a close adviser to Cromwell to being a military aide to the Prince of Condé, and in the latter capacity got to know Baruch de Spinoza in The Netherlands. Later on he travelled with Bishop Burnet through Germany, Switzerland and Italy.)

On trips to London, I spent some time with Constance Blackwell who had been the companion of Charles Schmitt. She had purchased a fine house in Camden Town for them to share but he died before he could ever inhabit it. She was terribly bereaved, and Julie and I tried our best to help her through those difficult days.

Constance had "great expectations". I advised her that when they were realized she ought to set up a foundation devoted to supporting the kind of intellectual activities that Charles was concerned with. We planned a conference on scepticism in the late 17th and early 18th centuries and other projects. I stressed the importance of multilingual participation by the conferees, so that people could use their own languages, and feel that continuous communication was going on. This partly depended on finding participants who know two or more languages, and partly by creating an atmosphere in which communication was given the highest priority over correct grammar or pronunciation. I also stressed the need to keep the conference or seminar on a unifying topic on which ongoing research could be carried on. These principles were incorporated into the Foundation's two first efforts in 1990, the Leiden seminar, and the scepticism conference at Wassenaar.

In 1989 I participated in another British Society conference at York University on scepticism, partly designed as a tribute to my own work and what it had inspired others to do. José Maia Neto was there. It was José's first trip to Europe and he was very excited. The conference was very good, covering materials on the history of scepticism from ancient times to Petrarch to the 20th-century. I was sorry that for some reason the collection was never published together.

Later in 1989, I helped organize a conference with Don Kelley

about Charles Schmitt's theme, the changes in the shapes of knowledge from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. We met at the Warburg Institute for two days, and were housed nearby. It was a truly great collection of participants from all over Europe, who had worked with Charles, plus several Americans. Giorgio Tonelli's widow participated, as did my son Jeremy, as did Tullio Gregory of Rome and Yehuda Elkana of Israel. We covered developments in all sorts of fields, and media, plus all sorts of aids to the transmission of knowledge, libraries, teaching, learned institutions and societies etc. It was quite a tribute to the researches inspired by some of Charles Schmitt's ideas. The problems were that we had, for financial and logistic reasons, to cram the whole program into two days, of papers presented one after another from 9 a.m to 6 p.m., to an audience sitting uncomfortably on wooden chairs. And we had the problem of holding a conference in the center of London, with all of the nearby distractions to lure people away. So the informal parts were less the whole group than just various portions of the group at different times.

During my trips to Europe in 1989 I did a lot of research at libraries and spent much time preparing for the first conference activities of the new Foundation for Intellectual History established by Constance Blackwell. We had first planned a conference on scepticism for and against religion to take place in Italy. When arrangements for that fell through, we explored other possibilities, and decided to hold it at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Wassenaar, a lovely spacious property between Leiden and the sea. Constance and I went there to discuss the logistics. All of the conferees could be housed and fed well there for four days and nights.

We then explored the possibility of holding a month long seminar at Leiden University itself. With the able assistance of Ernestine van der Wall, we found we could have a classroom at the university, research working space at the university library, and housing at a hotel and the international house along the Rapenburg, the beautiful main canal.

I wanted the seminar to be somewhat like Garber's NEH one, but much more international, participants from all over Europe and America. I wanted a unified topic about which the participants could do original and publishable research, and a topic on which there was a good deal of material available in libraries in The Netherlands. If the students were based in Leiden, they could easily get to The

Hague's Royal Library or Amsterdam's University Library in a short amount of time by train.

I chose as the research topic, "The Origins, Nature and Influence of *Les Trois Imposteurs, Moses, Jesus et Mohammed, ou l'Esprit de M. Spinoza*". I had been working on this on and off for years, and had studied the manuscript copies in libraries in Paris, in England, in The Netherlands, in Wolfenbüttel, and in various American libraries. (By the time the seminar began, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, had the largest number of manuscript copies, eight in all.) I had been discussing matters concerning the manuscripts with Margaret Jacob, with Silvia Berti (who found the first printed copy of 1719, in the Abraham Wolf Spinoza collection at UCLA), with several French scholars including Francois Charles-Daubert, and Bertram Schwartzbach. Leiden University library had lots of materials about the printing and suppression of the first published edition, and about arguments about authorship. I got microfilm copies of many manuscripts and published copies that had not been studied before.

So, this seemed a fine topic—lots of raw material available, lots of interest relating to various early Enlightenment topics. Constance and I invited two scholars, Francois Charles-Daubert and Silvia Berti, to join us in teaching the seminar. And we invited some European and American guest lecturers. We would have a two-hour session each afternoon, at 5 p.m., and informal contacts during the day and night. Leiden, during the summer, was not particularly crowded. We could usually lunch and dine together in a wide variety of restaurants and cafes. Julie and I had an apartment on the Rapenburg very near where everyone else was living.

Constance and I arranged to begin the Wassenaar Conference on religious and anti-religious scepticism right after the Leiden seminar. We gathered in Leiden to begin on July 1, 1990. Up to the last minute I was not sure I would make it. Somehow I had developed a terrible muscular pain in one leg, and could hardly stand or walk because of the pain. The problem began in earnest in the Paris airport. I could hardly walk from the plane to the custom controls. A doctor examined me in Paris, and found no cause for my disability. But because of it, we could not take the train to Leiden, since I could not climb into the train. So, we rented a car, and drove out of Paris on June 30, one of the worst days to leave, since half of the population were in their cars heading away from the city for their vacation. We got to Leiden, found our lodgings, and some

of our fellow seminarians. We began with a grand dinner, to which I had to be raised up a long flight of stairs by a motorized chair. I limped carefully and slowly around Leiden until a Dutch doctor decided that some kind of spasmodic episode had occurred in the leg, and prescribed medication accordingly. A couple of days later I was able to get around slowly but no longer painfully.

The seminar evolved into one of the most exciting intellectual events I have been part of. There was an excellent rapport amongst the teachers, with Constance, and amongst the students who came from Brazil, the U.S., England, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Italy. We all managed to communicate freely, and genuinely enjoyed each other's intellectual company. Everyone quickly got engrossed in the questions of who wrote, and who read the scandalous *Trois Imposteurs*. Wide ranging theories of its origins were presented and debated. Although the work claimed to be medieval in origin, it did mention Descartes, it did include texts from Thomas Hobbes, Baruch de Spinoza and Francois de la Mothe La Vayer.

Most of us worked away in the rare book section of the University of Leiden Library, breaking for lunch in a cafe nearby. The teachers were available for consultation much of the time. We would assemble en groupe at 5 p.m. for a seminar meeting, at which someone would present their findings, their ideas, or related matters, and free flowing discussion would ensue usually in French and English, with occasionally other languages. We had a number of visitors, scholars who were working on the subject. Bertram Schwartsbach came from Paris, Miguel Benitez, who had been finding more and more hitherto unknown manuscripts all over Europe, came from Spain, Alan Kors who has written on atheism in France participated for a week or two. We had a visitor at the last moment who had found an Italian manuscript of the Three Impostors with a frontispiece, a picture of the impostors. As she excitedly showed off her find, I rummaged through our accumulated source materials and showed her that approximately the same picture was in the manuscript in the University of Chicago. Some Dutch professors came. Ernestine van der Wall, who was our liason with the university, came and participated regularly. Jan van den Berg came sometimes. Others dropped in as did Margaret Jacob who was visiting in the area. So, it was a very rich month of intellectual food.

We would usually have a group dinner, and then sit around outdoor cafes and talk and talk. I think we all bonded extremely well,

and have continued to stay in contact. It was a wonderful creative experience for me, and I hope for others. Each day I was reeling with new ideas and interpretations. We made new friendships and formed a “Republic of Letters”.

Before leaving the Leiden seminar, I should mention that when we went to Leiden, Julie and I arranged through the Dutch post office (with Ernestine’s help) to have a fax installed in our apartment. Julie had started a literary agency, and wanted to keep in direct contact with the home base. A woman would pick up our mail and our telephone messages and faxes, and fax us a summary, with copies of the real goodies. One morning while I was still dozing, Julie got up when she heard the fax gurgling away. She came back to the bedroom with the news that I was threatened with a law suit for having published a negative review of Yuri Yovel’s book, *Spinoza and other heretics*. I was threatened with having to pay damages for causing Prof. Yovel’s potential failure to receive honors, grants, awards, etc. because of what I had said. This was a first for me. People had previously disagreed with what I had said, and argued about it by mail, in print, and in conversation. But this was the first time I was caught in a real “publish and perish” drama. The threat came from a lawyer in Jerusalem—he turned out to be Yovel’s brother-in-law—who told me firmly that even though I was outside of Israel, they had ways of pursuing their case against me. [I learned a year later when I was in Israel, that extraordinary efforts were made by Yovel and his legal team to prevent the publication of my review in Hebrew in the newspaper Ha’aretz.]

When I really awoke, I showed the letter to all of the seminarians, who did not know what to make of it. One of them, Chris Laursen, actually had a law degree, and had practiced a few years earlier. He agreed to handle anything that had to be handled. But nothing more was heard of the matter. I felt the least I could do was to publicize the legal threat by xeroxing and sending it, with the offending review all over the world.

The Leiden Seminar ended on July 30. All the participants were to send in papers that would be made into a volume, which appeared, after much editorial work, in 1996 with the imposing title, *Heterodoxy, Spinozism and Free Thought in Early 18th-Century Europe. Studies on the Traité des trois imposteurs*, edited by the three teachers, Silvia Berti, Francois Charles-Daubert and myself, published by Kluwer in a volume of over 500 pages. Many of the participants in the

volume have gone on to research and to publish further studies on the matter.

As the Leiden Seminar ended, the next big conference venture began, the Wassenaar Conference on "Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," starting on the evening of July 31, 1990. Ezequiel Olaso arrived early, so we included him in the end of the seminar, as well. Only Silvia Berti, Susanna Åkerman, Constance and myself moved from the seminar to the conference, which Constance and I had carefully designed as a follow-up to the one Charles Schmitt and I had organized at Wolfenbüttel on new materials about scepticism in the Renaissance and 17th-centuries. We had felt that so much new research had gone on since our original studies were published, that we had to try to bring together many of the researchers in Europe, America and Israel, to share their findings and insights on the emerging hot topic, scepticism and irreligion in the pre-Enlightenment and early Enlightenment.

This would be the first conference organized and presented by the new Foundation for Intellectual History, financed by Constance. The Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Wassenaar proved to be an excellent locale. It was a lovely property between Leiden and the Channel, fairly easy to get to, devoid of other distractions, with fine facilities for the participants, and a fine cuisine. Since Constance had supplied ample resources, we decided to have four days of papers, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, with much time for discussion, formal and informal. The papers were available in advance, so that participants could be ready to jump in with their points and ideas. There would be a break between papers for coffee, relaxation, etc. The pace was slow, and deliberate, and overall achieved its purpose of encouraging lots of thought and discussion about the themes presented. The first night after an initial banquet dinner, I presented an introductory paper outlining our general topic. The seventeen participants who came from various countries of western Europe, Ireland, England, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, and Italy, as well as Israel, the United States and Argentina, were in various forms of intellectual history, some emphasizing philosophy, some theology, some science, etc. A participant who did not present a paper was Arjo Vanderjagt of Groningen, who took an active part, and who was anxious to edit the proceedings, which he and I did in the volume which bore the conference title, published by Brill in 1993, financed in part by the

C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute Foundation. I mention this mostly because she was an important friend in Utrecht when I was working there in 1957–58. We spent much time discussing issues in 17th and 18th-centuries thought. I was happy to have a continuing link with her after her untimely death several years earlier. One of the participants at Wassenaar, Theo Verbeek, later on became the first C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute Professor at Utrecht.

The Wassenaar conference was, I believe, as good as it gets. We had a wonderful collection of active creative scholars together discussing live issues, and sharing their scholarly efforts. In contrast with the Latitudinarian conference at the Clark, this had none of the nastiness, friction or tension that permeated that affair. We co-existed pleasantly and enjoyably for four and half days. Occasionally some problems emerged but were solved. The conferees like the seminar formed a little republic of letters, which has generated much cooperative undertakings.

Although most of the discussions went on in English, people were encouraged to present their ideas in French and German as well. A bit of multilingual mixing took place all through it. My old friend from the early 60's, Olivier Bloch, spoke mainly French to everyone. Lothar Kreimendal gave his paper in German but carried on interchanges in English.

As soon as the conference ended, Constance and I started considering what the next history of scepticism gathering should be, and where.

One anecdote related to the conference needs to be recounted. When Silvia Murr arrived from Paris, she handed me a bottle of Bordeaux wine. I tried to explain to her in English and French, that I very much appreciated her generosity, but for medical reasons was not allowed to drink alcohol. She became more and more effusive about the fact that this bottle was from a special year and special vineyard, and was a gift for ME. So, I accepted it, and put it in my luggage. When, post conference, I arrived at Schiphol to check in, I found that a team of Israeli airport personnel were training the Dutch in security. They lined us up, and one by one asked, "Has anyone given you anything to take with you?" So, I mentioned the wine bottle and a toy David Katz had given me for Joel Damien. Immediately I was taken aside, interrogated over and over again. Then the toy, and especially the wine bottle were put through all sorts of screening devices, before I was allowed to board the plane. I showed the bottle to an American friend who is a great connais-

seur. He told me it was great. We arranged to take it to a good restaurant near here, and with ceremony it was opened and drunk by all except me. I don't know whether the Israeli security people did any damage to it.

In September I attended a conference in Ottawa, organized by Danièle Letocha on religion and reason in the Renaissance. She brought together a group of scholars from Europe and from Canada and the United States. Ottawa is a bilingual city, and the university is genuinely bilingual in a way that I did not find in McGill in Montreal or at the University of Toronto or York. George Williams, the author of the *Radical Reformation* was there. Years earlier I had enjoyed talking to him when I had a carrel in the Harvard Library next to his office. He was interested in my researches into Jewish influences, which he found in many of the Socinian thinkers and movements in eastern Europe in the 17th-century. I gave a paper on religious rationalism from Sebastian Castellio to Lithuanian Caraites rabbi Isaac ben Troki, whose *Faith Strengthened* played such a large role amongst the 17th-century Amsterdam Jews, and continued to play a role into the 20th-century. The conference explored the roots of religious rationalism from Erasmus and the early Reformation onward.

Because of my interest in Judaica I was taken to the National Library of Canada where there is a special collection. A wealthy Montreal Jew had collected a great deal of fine books and materials, and wanted to give them to McGill, which had an active Jewish studies program, providing they would put his name on something. They hesitated, and he took his collection to the National Library, where it has a lovely room, a catalogue, his name, but, mala-heureusement, no readers.

Later on that year Julie and I went to the InterAmerican Philosophy Congress in Buenos Aires. It was her first visit to South America.

When Olaso and others were planning their large scale conference, the new democratic government of Raul Alfonsín thought it could allot a lot of resources to the affair. By the time the congress took place, Argentina was locked in a dangerous escalating inflation. The allotted sum was now close to worthless. We foreign participants were put up in a mediocre modest hotel with many apologies. We understood, and sought to make the best of it. It was scary to watch the inflation rage up to 16,000 per cent while we were there. Nobody could make change because they rushed to the bank with any funds they received and put the money into indexed accounts.

Julie had been interested in the cause of the grandmothers of the

Playa de Mayo who demonstrated, demanding information about their “disappeared” kin. She met with them and discussed their campaign. I took part in aspects of the congress. One particularly interesting programme was a trialogue among Olaso, Danilo Marcondes of Brazil and myself about scepticism. We each spoke our own language, and carried on a continuous discussion and debate which was much appreciated by the audience. This led me to design one of my next ventures, an inter-American dialogue on scepticism for the following year. I had been slightly involved in Latin American philosophical affairs since 1963 when I took part in the International Philosophical Congress in Mexico City. At that time, I got some of the special flavor of the role that philosophy played in Latin America, where it was much more involved in political activity, and learned how exploited the teachers of philosophy were compared to those in the U.S. Over the years we had known various Latin American philosophers who were studying in the U.S. or were political refugees. I realized that the attitude of almost all American philosophers towards their Latin American colleagues was that the latter had little or nothing new to offer, and probably had substandard training. It seemed much more important and interesting to work with European colleagues than those in our own hemisphere. My experience from the time of the congress at Guadalajara to the two visits to Argentina and Brazil, was that there was a new ferment in Latin America. Younger scholars had studied in the U.S. or England, and were aware of contemporary concerns. They were working on similar questions in the history of philosophy. So, we could gain much from getting to know each other and exchanging ideas.

When I returned I told Constance Blackwell of my thoughts, and suggested we hold a conference on scepticism in which the participants would be half Americans and Canadians, and half Latin Americans, all of whom knew enough English or Spanish to communicate with one another. We sought for a venue and some funds. I went to the University of California, Riverside, to talk to its new Dean of Humanities, Brian Copenhaver, whom I had gotten to know over the years as we both worked on problems of Renaissance philosophy. He was enthusiastic, and recommended the project to the University of California Humanities Center, which agreed to fund the conference jointly with the Foundation for Intellectual History.

In 1990 I took part in one more conference, on Jewish Neo-Platonism at, of all places, Honolulu, Hawaii. Lenn Goodman got

the International Neoplatonism Society to hold their meeting there on this theme. Scholars mostly from Israel and the U.S. were there. We were picked up from our digs by the beach, early and taken to a conference center on top of the campus mountain, in a room like the United Nations, with no windows to distract us. We carried on each day until five, and were driven down to our hotel complex as the sun set. I gave a paper on a theme I have been working on for several years, the puzzling fact that some of the first interpreters of Spinoza saw him as a Kabbalist. Then and since I have been analyzing these early interpretations and what they may represent.

Fortunately Julie and I had spent a previous week on the island of Hawaii, and had our chance to marvel at the wonders of the island, especially the active volcano, which made one appreciate Spinoza's notion of *natura naturans*. It was our second trip to the Hawaiian Islands, and we were most grateful to Madelaine and Lenn Goodman for their hospitality. We were to meet them again at the beginning of 1992 in Jerusalem at another conference.

1991 and 1992 were the sort of conference years that characters in David Lodge drool about. In 1991 I organized two conferences and attended others in Mexico, Italy, Greece and Israel. But interspersed with these were some very dramatic family events.

The year began with a small conference I organized at the Clark Library on Spinoza and Newton as Bible scholars. Rob Iliffe was visiting UCLA that year and was happy to present a paper. Jim Force gave one developing his picture of Newton's theology. I gave one on Spinoza as a Bible scholar, putting him the context of what other Bible scholars of his time were saying. Amos Funkenstein gave some intriguing comments about my paper. I had become suspicious of all the praise heaped upon Spinoza as the first to discover that there were critical problems in the Biblical texts, and to rediscover the critical ideas of rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra of the 12th-century. Using Bible commentaries that are in the Clark collection, I showed that commentators had all come across the same problems Spinoza raised, such as how could Moses have written about his own death. They used various hermeneutical devices to defuse any sceptical problems. And they all knew about Ibn Ezra since his commentary appeared in the margins of the Bomberg Hebrew Bible published in Venice, along with those of Rashi and Kimchi. Bible scholars who read Hebrew all knew this material long before Spinoza came along. So I argued then and since that his contribution was the

conclusions he drew from the same materials, that ignored all the ways theologians had “saved the appearances”. Ed Curley was present and argued vigorously against me. Amos Funkenstein whose erudition in these matters was legendary, carried the day on my behalf. For me it was a wonderful chance to try out a new thesis. Jim Force and I decided to publish the papers with several more invited from scholars in England and Israel, appearing as the volume *The Books of Nature and of Scripture*.

The next month, the Pan-American Dialogue on Scepticism in the History of Philosophy was held at Riverside, California. on February 15–17. Nineteen conferees selected by Olaso and myself gathered at the University of California Center for Humanities, and spent a delightful three days discussing and arguing about matters historical and philosophical concerning scepticism. Papers were presented about early Greek scepticism, about signs of possible medieval interest in scepticism, about scepticism in modern philosophy, and about the merits of scepticism. The papers were available beforehand so active bilingual discussion could take place. On the whole I would rate it as an excellent conference in which many intellectual bonds and friendships were formed. However, in the informal hours, there was a tendency to divide along linguistic lines, so that a truly complete bilingual gathering did not take place all of the time.

It was in March 1991 that we learned of a serious family problem. Our daughter Maggi who was working at the Human Rights Institute at the University of Central America in El Salvador sent us a fax that said she had been told that she had a brain tumor. Julie quickly called in all of our knowledgeable friends to find out what could be done. An operation had to be performed in the U.S. Maggi had no health insurance in the U.S., so the Jesuits agreed to have the operation done gratis at one of their American hospitals, finally deciding on Loyola-Stritch in Chicago. By then, we were in contact with the surgeon, knew the that the tumor was a pituitary adenoma and the method of operation. We arranged that we would meet her in Chicago near the time of the surgery, to take care of her son, our grandson whom we’ve always called Damian. We hoped to bring them back to Pacific Palisades as soon as possible. She was to come with Damian to Chicago in early June for some tests, and then the operation would take place. As one can imagine we were extremely concerned.

I had been invited to Israel, where I had not been since 1985, to

give a talk at a memorial lecture in honor of Dan Duman, the son of one of my high school friends Abe Duman. He and I had been expelled from the Young Communist League in September 1939 for refusing to accept the Hitler-Stalin pact. We stayed together for a while in an independent leftist group but lost contact as we went to different colleges. When I was in Israel years later, he saw an announcement of a public talk I was giving, and got in contact. He had moved to Israel on retiring in the U.S. and was a consulting engineer on some U.S. military project. We became close again and saw him and his wife often during my Israeli period. His brilliant son Daniel, who had just started his career as a historian at Ben Gurion University died of melanoma and an annual lecture set up in his memory. I was asked by Esther Cohen, a medieval historian there, to give the lecture anytime I was in Israel.

I was ready, though I had many misgivings about returning to a world I had found so disturbing. In the United States, our younger daughter was soon to deliver her first child in Chicago in early April. We went there to await the arrival of her son. The delivery took longer and longer. I finally had to leave again to take part in a conference in Milan. En route in Kennedy Airport I learned that my friend Bernard Fensterwald had suddenly died. We had worked together for years on aspects of the Kennedy assassination and Watergate. And we had arranged to have dinner together on my return from this Italian trip.

When I got to Milan and went to bed I heard a phone ringing, but could not find the phone or a light. Finally it started again, and now I was ready. It was the news that I was a grandfather again, that Zachary Ray Popkin-Hall had arrived, and was fine.

At the meeting in the institute for the study of the history of philosophy and science I had the opportunity to meet and talk to some of the new younger scholars Guido Paganini, Guido Canziani and Anna Maria Baldi, were working on topics related to my own interests. These interactions always helped me focus and develop my ideas, and learn what others were doing.

From Milan I went to a wonderful conference at Cortona on the first reception of Spinoza's ideas. Paulo Christofolini and Onarorio Nicastro of Pisa brought a group of us together to discuss the first reactions to Spinoza. A Renaissance palazzo located in an Etruscan village south of Rome had been given to the Pisa institutions for such purposes as conferences. Unfortunately it had not been modernized,

and had no real cooking facilities. Getting in and out of the palazzo, required climbing lots and lots of stairs. Meals, especially dinner, were taken in restaurants in the town, over a kilometer away, up hill and down dale. I had great difficulty in doing the stairs and probably could not have gotten to and from the village. Fortunately my friend Luisa Simonutti was in attendance with a car. Her very young baby was with her, being cared for in the village by her mother. She drove me back and forth as often as was necessary.

We gathered twice a day to hear papers and to argue. And there were some serious arguments between various conferees, carried on usually in French and English, and sometimes in Italian. I gave a paper about the very early criticism of Spinoza's views in J. B. Stoupe's *La Religion des Hollandais* and Spinoza's involvements with the Prince of Condé and his entourage. I also gave an impromptu paper on "The Convertible Jew" as an appendix to Sarah Hutton's presentation. And I had the somewhat difficult job of presiding over a confrontation between two Spinoza experts, Jacqueline Lagrée and Wim Klever. Altogether, there was a very stimulating group gathered together with lots of fruitful formal and informal conversation.

En route to Israel, I stopped to give some talks to the Skepsis Society in Athens. Some younger scholars who had studied in America, France and England, began taking their sceptical ancestors seriously, formed a society, and published a journal, and held annual conferences at Pyrrho's birthplace. They were anxious to have contact with me, and I with them. I spent a week in Athens, and spoke to the Athenian Academy and to the Philosophy Department at the University of Athens. I did not know what to expect of their knowledge of the subject or our ability to communicate. But their leader had taken his degree with a friend of mine, John Anton, at Emory University. Others spoke French and/or English. They translated my papers in advance, and I was pleasantly surprised that some of the auditors knew my work very well. We had some lively discussions. It was also interesting to see how little connection Greek philosophy had had with European thought during the last five hundred years, and how it was now being reconnected.

While I was in Athens, I walked a good deal, but was no longer able to climb to the Acropolis. I was staying in a hotel near Syntagma Square. One morning I started off towards the Archeological Museum. En route, in front of the government buildings, there were many swarthy people, mainly women and children, with signs I could not

read. I learned that they were Kurds who had fled the chaos in Iraq at the end of the Gulf War, and were begging for help. This was before President Bush was shamed into doing something about their plight. When I got to the museum, a burly American was sitting on the steps. He told me that the museum guards were on strike for two hours. So, we talked. He had just left Israel, and was going to every place that St. Paul had been, explaining that he was an unaffiliated fundamentalist wandering through the Pauline world.

I left Athens for Jerusalem. At the Athens airport, even though the Gulf War had just ended, and there was much worry about terrorism, the Greek officials managed to put the waiting passengers for the Israeli flight in the same waiting room as those waiting for a flight to Cairo. Anyway, I made the right flight. I arrived about two weeks after the end of the Gulf War.

David Katz met me at Ben Gurion airport, full of news about the Scud missile attacks, and how the Katzes had weathered their life in a sealed room. They had a young baby who had to be carried around in a sealed basket in case another Scud attack occurred. Everyone I met in Tel Aviv wanted to tell me in the greatest detail what had happened to them. I wondered what people at Ben Gurion University would think of a paper about the supposed Jewish Council in Budapest of 1650. I hoped that people wanted to hear about something else than Scuds. We had a pretty lively discussion.

It turned out to be not so easy to get a seat back to Los Angeles. Most of the major airlines had discontinued service to Israel during the Gulf War. They were just beginning to return to operations. I had a booked return, but when I called to confirm it, my assigned ticket on a flight home had vanished. I then began calling and calling, and finally turned my case over to my cousin Donni, a native Israeli who manages the Jerusalem airport. I ended up being booked on an El Al flight that left Israel around 2:30 a.m., connected to a small plane in New York which would take those of us booked to Los Angeles across Canada and then down to LA. The whole flight took about twenty four hours and was totally exhausting.

At home I packed up my research and writing, took part in a conference at the Clark entitled "In and Out of the Ghetto" concerning what happened to Jews in Germany from the Middle Ages to about 1800. The German Historical Institute in Washington sponsored the gathering.

Julie and I had to get ready to move to Chicago where our

daughter Margaret was to have surgery. We moved into an apartment in the Marriott Residence Inn at Downers Grove fairly near the Jesuit hospital where the operation would take place. My niece Gail, who is a specialty nurse, lived nearby and had checked out the arrangements. We visited our new grandchild, Zachary, who was lying on the floor of his parents' apartment under a baby jungle gym, which I operated for him. Maggi and her son Damian arrived at the beginning of June, coming by air from New York on the very day the Bush administration had held its Gulf War victory parade in the Big Apple. People coming off the plane were mostly from that festivity. Our grandson, then less than three years old, emerged from the plane with a balloon from the New York parade.

We all moved into our temporary apartment, a duplex, and prepared for a lengthy stay. Maggi was given tests at the hospital and a date was set for the operation. When Maggi moved into the hospital we had complete custody of Damian who spoke mostly Spanish, since he was born and raised in El Salvador, but understood English most of the time. However we occasionally got into impenetrable linguistic impasses.

The operation involved entering the brain cavity through the sinus passages, and then removing the pituitary tumor. The neurosurgeon exuded confidence. On the date of the operation, my niece and her family took care of Damian while we nervously sat for hours in the waiting room. Finally the surgeon arrived and told us that the operation was completely successful. When we were allowed to see Maggi she was in the Intensive Care Unit attached to lots of tubes and monitors. It was scary. A little later my niece Gail looked over the charts and said everything was going well. We were told that the painful part of the healing process would be on her leg where flesh had been removed to secure the opening to the brain cavity. This soon turned out to be the case when Maggi was moved to a hospital room, and was allowed to walk a bit. But her son when he saw her with tubes and her cane was a bit startled.

The doctor said she could not travel by air because the change in air pressure might affect the patch to the brain cavity. We decided I would go on the train with her, and Julie and Damian would fly to California. While we were still in Chicago I was supposed to go to St. Louis to take part in José Maia Neto's defense of his dissertation on the *Christianization of Pyrrhonism*. It was decided I had better skip the defense and instead have José come to visit us, which

he did. He played soccer with Damian, and we had a very delightful reunion.

We finally left via rail in a handicapped compartment of the Amtrak train. It had two beds, an upper and a lower, plus its own toilet facilities, and lots of room service if desired. In view of Maggi's condition I took the upper berth. I understand it was quite a sight to see me and my rotund torso making its way to the upper level. We did go upstairs for meals. Since we had crossed the country many times by car, we were not as excited as many of our fellow passengers with the scenery, and found the trip a bit boring. Forty hours after leaving Chicago we were expectantly looking forward to arriving in Los Angeles and being greeted by Julie and Damian. Instead, just as the train was approaching Pasadena, an announcement was made that a major earthquake had just struck the Los Angeles area, and that it was not known if the train could proceed. Later we learned we were in fact at the epicenter of the earthquake, the Sierra Madre quake. The train came to a halt in Pasadena; we were finally told that the train could not go on, and that we would be bussed into Union Station. We arrived about three hours behind schedule to find Julie and Damian at the station, both suffering from the flu, and with no knowledge of what had happened to us. They had been waiting all that time. We finally got all of the baggage and ourselves into our car and set out for our home in Pacific Palisades where Maggi would recuperate.

Our lives revolved primarily around the patient and her young son for quite a while until she felt ready to return to El Salvador to work on the peace process going on there. For the rest of 1991, I think I participated in only one further conference, a gathering at the Institute for the History of Philosophy at the University of Mexico. I had gotten to know some leaders of the group on visits to Buenos Aires, chiefly José Antonio Robles and Alejandro Herrera. They invited me and Margaret Wilson, who has died recently, to take part in a conference about 17th-century rationalism.

I knew that the upcoming year would be full of conference activity, because of celebrations of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain five hundred years earlier, celebrations about Columbus, Gassendi's four hundredth birthday and many other matters. At the very end of 1991 we flew off to Israel for two conferences, one concerning Leibniz, and the other a gala affair concerning the Expulsion. The first was very under-financed, and the second very over-financed. So

we began our Israeli stay in a modest orthodox hotel in Tel Aviv where the first sessions were held. The Leibniz conference, partly organized by my former colleague at Tel Aviv University, Marcelo Dascal, then moved to student quarters at the Reformed Jewish Seminary near the King David Hotel. The day of the transfer I was supposed to give a talk at the Israel Academy about Jewish Christians and Christian Jews in Spain 1492 and after, on some “exciting” news I had found about some important figures in Spain of Jewish origins in the world after the Expulsion, including the chief editor of the Old Testament portion of the Complutensien Polyglot Bible, who as late as 1544 [sic!] wrote from Spain where he was professor at Salamanca and Alcala that at age seventy he was the last of the Jewish sages of Spain. The paper was published in *Judaism* in its 1992 edition. While I was supposed to speak in Jerusalem, Julie was supposed to attend a wedding. A storm set in, ice, sleet, and a blizzard that cut off Jerusalem. We decided it was too risky to each go our own way, and we stayed with the Leibniz conference group that managed to get to our rather primitive student quarters, and found Jerusalem a winter wonderland, with snow and ice blocking off most roads.

In spite of the strange situation, where Jerusalem almost totally unused to snow and ice, barely functioned, we carried on about Leibniz. I gave my paper on Isaac La Peyrère and Leibniz. One morning we struggled over to the King David Hotel, less than a block from our quarters, and found that it was like a refugee center. My cousin and family took us out one evening to a real steak house in Jerusalem, something that had not existed during our previous visits. We were told that due to the pressure of the ultra-orthodox groups to ban the sale of non-kosher meat in Israel, a legal decision was made that exemptions would be made for cities which had a certain number of gentiles who also had to eat, and were not obliged by Moses or anyone else to only eat kosher food. We told that only Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa qualified. The food was very much better in those cities as a result. We had another dinner with our old friend and colleague, Yosef Kaplan of Hebrew University in an Arab restaurant which had opened a branch in the Jewish part of Jerusalem since, because of the intifada, non-kosher Jewish eaters were afraid to go the Old City and the surrounding Arab quarter.

Immediately following the Leibniz conference we moved from the

primitive dormitory facilities to the elegant Laromme Hotel down the street for the big conference concerning the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. This was to be a stellar conference with scholars from Spain, Israel and the US discussing the Expulsion of 1492. The conference began in the Grand Ballroom of the Laromme Hotel with a banquet attended by Prime Minister Shamir and other dignitaries, and a speech by Prof. Haim Beinart on the awful tragedy of the Expulsion and the huge number of Jewish lives, (around 800,000 he said) that were ruined as a result. It turned out as the conference proceeded that the Spanish scholars, who were now able to do micro research on what happened town by town in Spain, were holding that the Expulsion wasn't so bad. The number of actual expellees was quite small, maybe around 10,000, and many of them came back because like all good Spaniards, they liked Spain better than the outside world. They enriched Spanish culture, etc. My paper on the New Christian anti-Trinitarians early in the 16th-century did not sit well with some of the Spanish scholars, who either denied the Jewish origins of some of the figures I discussed, or who did not want to see an opposition intellectual world growing up in Spain after the Expulsion. There was lots of time and space for fruitful contacts with scholars from Israel, Spain and the U.S. during the days of the conference.

Julie left before it was over. I stayed and visited with many friends. The last day as I was preparing to leave I met a former colleague from Tel Aviv University on the street, Yosef Agassi, who had read my earlier section of intellectual autobiography, and wanted me to read his, which he gave me then and there. It is a striking portrait of the psycho-philosophical drama of living within the Popperite world.

I left Israel on a flight on Alitalia to Rome, where somehow an Italian clerk torn out the wrong strip of my airline ticket, which I discovered to my dismay later in Amsterdam at the departure desk of Delta airlines. They had to call Rome, which fortunately still had the piece they had extracted and I was allowed to proceed.

I visited in Rome with Silvia Berti and then set off first to give a talk at Pisa, where my late friend Onorario Nicastro, was my host and my guide, and then to visit Professor Antonio Rotondo who had organized two conferences on the history of toleration and wanted me to organize the third of his series. I was happy to meet him in person. He seemed more knowledgeable about my writings than I

was. We talked for many many hours. Unfortunately this planned third conference never took place. I could not attend the second in 1994 because by the time the date of the conference was set, I was deeply involved in other matters, chiefly the celebration of our fiftieth wedding anniversary.

From Florence I travelled by train to Lyons, France, where my son Jeremy was a Fulbright Professor, and was living with his family. I had not been forewarned that there were two Lyon stations, one suburban, and the other at the center of town. As the train pulled out of the suburban station, I saw my son on the platform. I got off at the city station, and it took about a half hour to find the means to make a phone call. My daughter in law, Beate, remarked on the case of the missing grandfather. Eventually my son arrived, and we went off to their lodgings. Both my older grandsons were attending school in Lyon, were pretty proficient in French by then, and were playing chess with their classmates. The oldest, Gabriel, actually got on the city of Lyon team, and made quite a few trips around Europe with the team.

On the first day I was there Jeremy had arranged for me to see the copy of the Complutensien Polyglot Bible that was in the Bibliothèque de Lyon. It was the first actual copy that I was able to see, and it added greatly to my understanding of what the Polyglot Bible project involved. After visiting so many provincial libraries in France over the years, the Bibliothèque de Lyon was a real treat. It was located across the street from the central train station, and the modernistic civic center with its California shopping mall. It was a six story building. At the street level one could see the citizens of Lyon reading newspapers and magazines in the library. The rare book room was on the top of the building. When we arrived and Jeremy introduced me to the librarian, the six volume set of the 1517 Polyglot Bible was trundled over to me to examine to my heart's content. My son, who is an expert in publishing history, found it a marvel, with the many different fonts, the three columns of Biblical text, Hebrew, Latin and Greek, and the Aramaic paraphrase and new Latin translation thereof at the bottom of each page. He showed me what had to go on to justify the lines, to make the pages even, etc. I had read a description of the contents, but seeing it was an eye-opener. The apparatus for the Greek text was minimal. A few pages

of grammatical rules, and dictionary at a time when Greek was just being introduced into European studies. The Hebrew volume on the other hand had an elaborate Hebrew grammar, Hebrew lexicon, and an Aramaic-Latin lexicon, and a pronouncing dictionary from which one could find the Aramaic equivalent of any Latin term, and know how to pronounce it. I wondered what the point of such a pronouncing lexicon could have been. Who would one speak to in Aramaic? The small group of members of the Syriac Orthodox Church, probably unknown to Europeans at that time? The prefatory materials by Cardinal Ximenes, the sponsor of the Polyglot Bible project, clearly indicated that he thought since Aramaic was the language of Jesus it had a special status for religious people in the early 16th-century. Why? It occurred to me that this was a sign of the Cardinal's expectation that Jesus would soon return and that the reformed Christians of Spain then could talk to him! The Polyglot Bible project was a millenarian venture well worth the enormous investment of time, energy and resources. And Alfonso de Zamora, the Jew who converted in 1506 to take on direction of the Old Testament section of the project, who knew Aramaic, would help prepare for this in terms of the Aramaic targums that were included in the Biblical texts, (with Latin translations that never existed before), and all of the Aramaic linguistic apparatus. To check out my suspicions, as soon as I got back to America I called my late dear friend Judah Goldin, a leading specialist in post-Biblical Judaism, and asked if he had ever seen an Aramaic pronouncing dictionary, to which he responded "No". When I asked further why would such a dictionary exist in 1517, he suggested it might be a game of some erudite rabbis who wanted to correspond or talk in Aramaic. This was obviously far different from what is in the Polyglot Bible. A series of themes about Spanish millenarianism and the theology of Spanish New Christians resulted from mulling over what I had seen in the Bibliothèque de Lyon. By now I have seen about ten copies of the Polyglot, and the Lyon one is the most impressive.

Also in Lyon I met Anthony McKenna the indefatigable entrepreneur of scholarship about clandestine literature in France. I probably would have been involved in some of his many projects if my European travelling had not come to a halt a couple of years later. I was in fact involved in the venture he partly edited of a tribute volume to Elisabeth Labrousse on her 80th birthday, sending in an

article on Pierre Bayle and the Conversion of the Jews, indicating that Bayle had shifted the subject from a theological one to a psychological and sociological one.

I left Lyon on the TGV for Paris where I spent some time visiting with and conferring with various colleagues. Yosef Kaplan was there, and Constance Blackwell came from London to see me and to confer about our planning for the conference on scepticism around 1800 that would take place in 1995. From Paris I went to The Netherlands and conferred with people at the Rosenthaliana Library. It has turned out that that was the last time I was able to get there. I learned of a library sales catalogue of Amsterdam Jewish manuscripts of the early 19th-century which gave me some realization of the large number of copies of some of these items over more than a century after they were first written. Just a few days earlier I had convinced Henri Méchoulan to purchase a previously unknown one that was in the hands of the Paris bookseller, Paul Jammes. I also learned of the existence of two small logical texts in Spanish by Abraham Cohen Herrera, the great kabbalist expositor who died in Amsterdam in 1635. One of these ends with a chapter on "method" with a discussion of clear and distinct ideas as the criterion of truth. This has to have been published before Descartes's *Discourse on Method*. I intended to edit the text when I next had a chance to be in Amsterdam. Since that has not happened and may both happen, I have so far unsuccessfully tried to get others to look into this, and to see if there was any connection between Herrera and Descartes.

From The Netherlands I returned to the United States to commence one of the busiest years of scholarly travel in my whole life. I went briefly to Arizona State U. to give a paper I had promised them of my reasons for suspecting Columbus was a Jew, or was working with some Portuguese and Spanish Jews and New Christians. In March I was invited to give a plenary address to the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies meeting in Seattle. I had undertaken a reconsideration of my previous views about scepticism in the Enlightenment in the light of all of the writings of Giorgio Tonelli, Ezequiel de Olaso, Keith Baker and Larry Bongie. In 1963 I had launched a new outlook on the role scepticism had played in the Enlightenment, emphasizing especially the role of David Hume.

On the basis of what my friends had done since then I saw that one had to re-evaluate the kind of scepticism of the *philosophes*, the role of Sextus Empiricus in 18th-century thought, and the scepticism

that was developing in Germany before and after Immanuel Kant's work. This led me to do further researches in France in 1993 and to write about the roles of Condorcet and Brissot, the leaders of the Girondins, carrying scepticism right up the time of the French Revolution. My paper in its most recent form appeared along with the key essays of Tonelli and Olaso in *Scepticism in the Enlightenment* ed. R. H. Popkin, 1998, Kluwer. Two further versions will appear as articles for the two Cambridge University Press volumes on 18th-century philosophy. This also led to a lengthy study of knowledge of Sextus Empiricus in Hume's time, and by serendipity to the discovery of an unknown partial French translation of Sextus published by a mathematician in the court of Frederick the Great. Chris Lausen and I published the details of this in the *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*.

From Seattle I went to the University of Michigan where I was to be a visiting scholar at their Institute of Humanities. I had accepted this invitation before I knew of a great 1492 celebration being organized at University of California, Davis by Arthur Williamson including several of my friends from abroad. I had scheduled a conference at the Clark Library right after my stint in Michigan, so I had no opportunity even to drop in at the Davis festival.

At Michigan I took part in a formal program, and gave a new paper about the finding of the Lost Tribes in America. It is a much expanded version of the paper I gave at the Menasseh ben Israel conference.

Since I had little official business at Ann Arbor I played around exploring the university library holdings on computer. I made two exciting finds which have been part of ongoing research projects ever since. One is that I found there had been an essay contest set by the French Academy of Moral Sciences in 1843 about whether scepticism could be successfully answered. Participants were told that they had to discuss Sextus Empiricus, Bayle and Bishop Huet specifically. The contest was managed by Prof. Adolph Francl, the first Jewish professor in France, and I learned the name of the winner. Later that year I saw his prize winning essay in the British Library, and was not too impressed by it. The other find was that the writings of Sextus Empiricus had appeared in Russian translation in 1977 in an edition of 200,000 copies put out by the Soviet Academy of Sciences! I had followed the fortuna of Sextus in Europe from the late 15th-century onward, and I had tried to show how

Sextus's sceptical arguments had played a vital role in undermining the dogmatism of the Scholastics and then of the new philosophers from Descartes onward. But I never thought Sextus would have appeared in totalitarian Russia when every form of questioning was being suppressed. The Michigan copy was in storage, so I had to wait until my visit to the British Library to hold the actual item, two volumes of Sextus in Russian. (I now have my own copy that was given to me by the present editor of the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* on his return from Moscow earlier this year.)

I dashed home from Michigan to a dinner party my wife was holding on the eve of the conference I had organized at the Clark on Jewish Christians and Christian Jews from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. David Katz was there having just come down from the Expulsion conference at UC Davis.

For at least a decade I had been interested in the interaction between philo-semitic Christians and Jewish thinkers who were trying to accommodate Christian claims in their religious views during the 17th-century. The concepts of Jewish Christians and Christian Jews had been offered earlier by H. J. Schoeps and Jan van den Berg. Now with the extensive research that was going on into Christian Hebraists, philo-semitic Christian millenarians, and Jews who seemed to be attracted to their views, I felt a conference of leading researchers could help focus on this aspect of intellectual and religious history. Nine scholars were invited, Bernard McGinn, Jerome Friedman, Allison Coudert, David Katz, Arthur Williamson, James Force, Dagmar Barnouw, Gordon Weiner and myself, giving papers on subjects from the Renaissance to the early 19th-century. Amos Funkenstein participated as a critic and discussant. Katz and I had been following out indications of involvements of Christians in the Sabbatai Zevi movement, and of the impact of the movement in Christian circles. We showed some of the ways the earlier Quaker millenarian movement around James Nayler seemed to flow into the Jewish movement that followed. Materials from the Hartlib papers, from the Dury papers in Zurich and other sources, indicate a lot of items crying out for more investigation. I mentioned a query from the latter part of the 17th-century sent to John Dury about whether one could be a true and believing follower of the Law of Moses, and a true and believing Christian. Dury hemmed and hawwed, and finally said, Yes, but if you decide to do it, do it in Amsterdam, not in Germany!

It was a very good conference that later appeared in book form,

Jewish Christians and Christian Jews from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, Kluwer, 1994. I found as usual that it gave me a chance to develop my ideas, and to learn from the others.

Shortly after our Clark conference I headed off to England. First David Katz and I joined forces at the University of Sheffield to find out how the project to computerize the Hartlib papers had been carried out, in order to learn if something like this could be done with the massive unpublished Newton papers. The Hartlib papers, a collection of around 25,000 manuscript pages, had been transferred to computer disks as photographs that could be enlarged, turned, brightened, etc. The pages had been transcribed, and indexed according to names, topics, etc. It was a monumental task. Those of us who had worked on the papers earlier had had to rummage through the manuscript pages with little or no guidance. Suddenly one could enter a name, or topic, and all of the entries would come up. Then one could call them up, and print the ones one wished to study further. After we were shown how this was done, we were given the opportunity to try it out. We got files on "Jew", "Israelites", "Quakers" and lots more that I have still not sorted. We had to do this quickly because a large conference was going to be held at the University of Sheffield to celebrate the launching of the computerized Hartlib papers on CD-ROM disks that any library could obtain. I was one of the featured speakers, and gave a talk on Hartlib, Dury and the Jews, dealing with their philo-semitic millenarian activities, putting together materials I had gathered from the Hartlib papers earlier, from the Dury archives in Zurich, papers in the British Museum, plus others in Stockholm, Kassel and elsewhere.

Many of the leading scholars in 17th-century English intellectual history and literature were at the conference. When I arrived they tried to lodge me up a couple of flights of stairs, while the female guests were down below. I explained that there was no way I could run up and down stairs any more, so I was lodged in the women's section, and had to sneak in and out of the bathroom facilities. At the end of the conference I was asked if I could manage to come back a few weeks later to give a paper for the opening the University of Sheffield Institute for Humanities, an institute that would house the Hartlib papers and other early 17th-century documentary sources.

I left Sheffield to join Julie, who was visiting nearby, to make our first visit to Scotland. During this period of travelling in the United Kingdom I was having a harder and harder time getting around.

Climbing stairs was difficult. Getting out of railroad stations became a serious problem. It often required the help of the stationmaster. We found a hotel in Edinburgh that I could manage, and we had a wonderful time just being tourists for a change. I did not go to any library, or look up a colleague. And I did manage to climb slowly up to Edinburgh Castle.

Next I was off to Paris to be a celebrant at the 400th birthday party for Pierre Gassendi that Silvia Murr had arranged. She had hoped to launch Gassendi as a major intellectual force throughout the world. Her plans started off very large, and gradually got smaller and smaller. We met in the amphitheatre of the Sorbonne. I was housed in a nice small hotel about ten minutes away near the Odeon. (Constance Blackwell also stayed there). The rooms were tiny so that one had to plan each move in the room to get one's clothes, to wash, etc. The walk from the hotel became harder and harder each day, since it involved going up hills. The first night there, John Rogers came by and we went out to dinner at a nearby restaurant. It was filled with smoke. I suddenly started gasping, and coughing. John practically had to carry me out of the restaurant where in the cool evening air I could breathe again.

Most of the people I knew of who worked on Gassendi over the past decades were there. So, it was a most interesting exchange of ideas. The setting made discussion a bit difficult. The historical amphitheatre was uncomfortable. There was conflict about whether the talks and discussion could be bilingual or had to be in French. Holding the conference in the heart of the Latin Quarter led to a constantly changing audience as people went off to see other attractions in Paris. In fact I used the occasion to go over to the National Archives to ferret out a manuscript by the Girondist teader, Jean Pierre Brissot, on Pyrrhonism. My son Jerry had given me its call number, as had Larry Bongie. Jerry told me to write, in French, to the chief archivist, asking permission to see the item which was in a private collection. In due course I got a reply authorizing me to see the document in question. I arrived at the Archives nationales, a medieval building in old Paris, which has been transformed inside into a 21st-century wonder. After due interrogation I was given a card to slip in slot to enter the reading room. There I entered my request in a computer. It immediately began blinking lights, like a pinball machine crying TILT. It told me to report immediately to the central desk. There I was told that the document in question

was not allowed to be seen in this building. I showed my letter of authorization. The librarians told me the chief archivist, who had signed my letter, was in Africa, and would not be back for a couple of weeks. I said I would only be around for a couple of days. This led to hushed conferences, followed by the suggestion that I go out to lunch while they worked on the problem. When I returned I was told a solution had been found—the Brissot papers were not allowed to be seen in the building of the Archives nationales, but that did not mean they could not be seen in another building, like the one across the courtyard. So I was sent to a lady's office where boxes and boxes of Brissot's papers were delivered. I rummaged through them, found the mss. on Pyrrho, as well as lots of correspondence including a holograph letter from George Washington inviting Brissot to dinner at Mount Vernon. A sign on each box said that nothing in this box can be photocopied. The lady whose office I was working in asked, "Do you want any of this xeroxed?" I said yes. She took about 150 pages down to a huge copy machine, quickly got me my copies, and I was off. Based on this material, plus exploring Brissot's earlier attempt to write an encyclopedia of Pyrrhonism, I have given him his place in Enlightenment scepticism.

The last session of the Gassendi conference was held at the Collège de France where Gassendi had been a professor, and where his bust is in the court of honor. I was asked by the Collège if I would be willing to come back and present a month-long series of lectures on my work the next time I was in Paris. As it turned out I was not to be in Paris again except for a week long vacation Julie and I took in the summer of 1994.

The tension between Silvia Murr and other organizers grew greater during the meetings. After the formal sessions there was a meeting to decide how and whether to organize a continuing Gassendi center. Olivier Bloch and Tullio Gregory opposed any formal organization, and gradually plans for such a venture dissolved.

I went back to London in order to head up again to Sheffield for the talk for the opening of their Institute. I made a brief side trip to Oxford, staying with David Katz and family, in order to look up and at an unpublished diagram Isaac Newton had drawn up for John Locke explaining the symbols of the Book of *Revelation*, the trumpets, the vials, etc. It was in Locke's papers. David had made arrangements for me to use a secret elevator to get to where I could see the document. But first I had to be admitted. When I told the

librarian I had had a permit in 1953 this created a crisis, since I did not recall the date of that permit. Finally I was allowed to have a new permit, access to the elevator, and a view of the lovely Newton diagram.

I had agreed to return to Sheffield. My third trip in 1992, if they could send me by taxi to Manchester where I could catch a plane for Dublin where I was to talk at both Trinity College and the University College. The drive across the Peaks District was fascinating. Then a quick flight to Dublin. I was to stay in the guest house of Trinity College, which turned out to be up two flights in a lovely Georgian Building. The help of some students was needed to get my bags up to the rooms. A niece of Julie's, Karen Peterson, was a graduate student at Trinity, and we had a lovely dinner together. The next day I gave my talk, met with my friends at the college, and next made my way to University College, the predominantly Catholic institution for a talk there.

One of the things I wanted to do in Dublin was to work a bit at the Marsh Library which I had briefly seen on a previous trip. It is the library of Bishops Stillingfleet and Marsh, opened in 1708, and pretty much frozen in time since. The librarian, Muriel McCarthy, was most happy to see me, and to find what she could of their treasures from the handwritten catalogue of 1708. I quickly realized that the collection contained a marvelous treasure-trove of Latin Judaica from the 16th and 17th-centuries. It contained works which I had not been able to find elsewhere. Much to my surprise it had two copies of the Menasseh ben Israel edition of the Mishna that I had written about. The librarian at the Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam had told me there were only two known copies, one in his collections, and the other in the private collection of the late Dr. Fuks. So, with the Marsh holdings we had doubled the known copies.

After taking extensive notes, I told Muriel that I would try to publicize the riches of the collection. She showed me a small conference room that had been built for the library, and said she would very much appreciate it if I could arrange a conference, the first to be held at the Marsh! On returning to London I talked this over with Constance Blackwell who agreed that I should organize a small conference for 1994. I got Muriel to make me a microfilm of the handwritten catalogue, which I then had reproduced in California in full size and distributed to the conferees so they could see in advance the treasures available.

After so much travelling in 1992, the next year was fairly quiet. The Philosophy Department at Emory University invited me to be a visiting Woodruff Professor in the spring term. Several of the people there were old friends, so it sounded like a pleasant prospect. I gave an exciting seminar of themes in the history of scepticism, and a class on Spinoza, using much of the new material I had acquired in recent years. During this period I met Marsha Keith Schuchard, an independent scholar who was doing amazing work on Freemasons, Jews and Swedenborgians in England in the 18th-century. I quickly realized that I had to get her in touch with some of my other associates, and to bring her into my conference orbit. She introduced me to material about Leibniz and Swedenborg's brother-in-law, Benzeliu, who wanted to set up an institute for the study of calculus and the Kabbala. I realized that this and some of what Allison Coudert had discovered about Leibniz and Knorr von Rosenroth, the editor of the *Kabbala Denudata*, ought to be incorporated into a conference on Leibniz and Religion, which was held at the Clark in 1995.

I travelled a bit from Emory, once to York University in Toronto to participate in a doctoral examination and to give a talk, and once to St. Louis where Red Watson had organized a two-day conference on early modern philosophy. The latter impressed me very much. I had wondered why the British Society for the History of Philosophy could have so many conferences well attended, but nothing like this was happening in the U.S. History of philosophy was drowned out at the American Philosophical Association meetings. (I went to one on Gassendi at which the audience varied from two to four, partly because Saul Kripke was talking at the same time.) Watson got over twenty people who came from two to three hundred miles around, and stayed for a night and a Chinese banquet and lots of good talk. It was the first chance I had had in years to talk with my former student Phil Cummins from Iowa. Theo Verbeek and I gave the principal papers, and discussed everybody else's presentations.

I went to England in 1993 to speak at the British Society's conference at St. Anne's College, Oxford on Bishop Berkeley. In going there I now knew that I had to make special preparations, or I might not be able to get out of the railroad station. John Rogers, who met me on the platform, had gotten permission to take me out a special door where his car was waiting, so I did not have to negotiate either going over or under the tracks.

The conference was very pleasant in the college grounds. There were few historical papers. Mine was an outgrowth of what I had written the year before on scepticism in the Enlightenment showing that Berkeley played a special role for Enlightenment thinkers in setting up their special brand of scepticism. I even used some comments from Brissot's papers as examples of how Berkeley was interpreted.

It was getting harder for me to get around, so I took on less and less. I had cancelled plans to take part in a conference in Australia and to spend a month at the National University.

Maggi and Damien came to visit us, and she had a check-up, resulting in the terrible news that she would have to have another operation since the pituitary tumor had grown back. The operation, lasting over six hours, was a failure since the doctors could not safely remove the growth. We then got a leading specialist at USC on the case who did successfully complete the operation. Maggi had gotten a grant to write about the peace process in El Salvador and was supposed to be off to New Haven where she would be connected with Yale. Her trip was delayed until January 1996. Damian and she was still with us when the Northridge earthquake struck on Jan. 17, 1994. We were all startled but there was no damage in our apartment.

I went off to Emory again doing just one seminar on Hume's patron, the Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsey, the leader of the French Freemasons. We analyzed his book, and explored his relations to Hume and to a lot of strange figures. It was a very exciting seminar with Keith Schuchard participating.

In March I flew to Las Vegas to be the chief speaker at the Western branch of the American Society for 18th-century studies at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, organized by my former student Craig Walton. Craig put us up in a Holiday Inn, the only one in town that had no gambling devices. It was for people who had to be in Las Vegas but did not want to participate. Jim Force and I wandered out and set foot in a couple of casinos. Right after the conference I flew to Charlestown, South Carolina where the entire American Society for 18th-Century Studies was meeting. I had been asked to come as one of the few living founding members so they could honor me. When the society began we were just a few dozen who all knew each other and knew what others were interested in.

Now it had grown to 2–3000 members, meetings in grand hotels with hundred of sessions. After the banquet at which I received a plaque I got back to Atlanta, where my next stop was supposed to be a quick trip to Utrecht to be the chief speaker at the gathering of Dutch philosophers. My good friend Theo Verbeek was especially anxious have me come. He had just been appointed to the C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute chair of the history of ideas. I had known and worked with the donor thirty five years earlier. This would be Theo's first organized conference as chair holder. In the week before I was coughing and getting feverish. After my seminar I was taken to Emory Hospital's Emergency Room. For two or three hours I was tested and tested, and then told that I did not have pneumonia, so it was OK for me to make my trip. I was given lots of antibiotics. The next day I had dinner with Ralph Freedman and Lore Metzger. They begged me to call off the trip. I called Julie who spoke to Theo. I went to another doctor near my hotel, at another branch of Emory hospital. He also said I did not have pneumonia and it was OK to make the trip. So, I upgraded myself to Business Class, coughed and wheezed all across the Atlantic, and landed exhausted. I felt very sick but managed to give my lecture. The next day Theo took me to a Dutch doctor who told me very quickly that I had pneumonia and should go home as soon as possible. I could not go back for a couple of days, so Elisabeth Erdman-Visser took me from my hotel. I coughed and wheezed in her house until the time came to fly back. When I got home my doctor said I had a full blown case of pneumonia.

I kept coughing and coughing, and at least twice my oxygen supply was cut off and I fell onto the floor. The doctor told me I could not possibly go back to Atlanta to finish my seminar. I was determined to do so, and was planning to do so, when I blanked out, fell off the couch, and had what I can only describe as an after death experience, the bright light at the end of a tunnel, etc. I hit the floor, and woke up and only got as far as the doctor's office.

The final class of the seminar was given by phone with me in my pajamas and two visitors, Susanna Åkerman and Constance Blackwell giving talks while I commented long range.

I stayed home until June when I seemed to have recovered from the pneumonia. Julie and I went off first to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary near New Hope, Pennsylvania, where many of our relatives and friends could gather. It was a very rewarding affair for

both of us, and it turned out to be the last time we would see some of our best friends. Afterwards we went to New York for a few days, the last time I have been there. Part of the reason for going was to begin work on an enterprise that was to take up much of my time for the next four years, organizing and editing the *Columbia History of Western Philosophy*. I met with some officials of the Columbia University Press, and with some potential editors of major sections of the work. I conferred with Jerry Press who organized the section on ancient philosophy, and with Steven Brown who wrote the section on medieval Christian philosophy.

We returned for a few weeks to California before going to Ireland for the Marsh conference. During the spring we had been organizing the hotel reservations, the dinners with Muriel via fax, plus a reception by President Mary Robinson, who was a friend of Muriel's.

We flew first to New York, (I had to have oxygen en route) stayed overnight at the airport, and then took the daytime British Airways flight to London, with oxygen. It was our 50th anniversary trip, so I agreed to keep away from libraries, only see friends, and go to the theater. After a few days we flew to Dublin for the Marsh conference. Almost all of the conferees were booked into the same hotel, so we got together almost immediately. The next morning we gathered at the Marsh Library. Unfortunately I could no longer climb the stairs to the library proper, but fortunately there was a door through the garden which led to the conference room. The others got their first look at the marvelously-preserved Marsh Library. Then we began our conference on the treasures of the Marsh. I started with a paper on some of the special Latin Judaica, beginning with the Spanish Polyglot Bible, and including the Menasseh ben Israel Mishna, and other items.

Our conference only had ourselves, the conference participants, as the audience for each paper. Due to financial constraints we had to fit all the papers into a two-day format, which meant having one paper after another, without the usual leisurely pace for informal talk between papers that we had at conferences at the Clark. It was a bit trying, but I think we all enjoyed it, and the papers were excellent and will be published in the near future in Kluwer *International Archives of the History of Ideas* series. The participants from outside of Ireland were truly amazed at the rich treasures of the Marsh Library, especially in their own fields of specialization. Several have been back to use the actual volumes since the conference.

Perhaps the high point of the conference was our reception by President Mary Robinson at Phoenix House. We were taken in a bus for our appointment, but had to wait because just ahead of us were the returning heroes of the Irish soccer team that had played a few days before in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena in the World Cup. Everything was halted for their heroic return and their visit to the President by helicopter. As the helicopter took off, with President Robinson waving to it, we were ushered in and had our reception. The President was very interested in what we were doing. She knew the Marsh Library and seemed pleased that we were making it better known internationally.

After our reception we finished our programme, had a wonderful banquet, and the next day set off for other destinations. Most of the participants went to London where Constance Blackwell was having a large gathering to discuss founding a new international interdisciplinary society for the history of ideas. I went late the next morning to the Italian Cultural Institute where the discussion was taking place. In view of my deteriorating health I realized that I could not be active in the ambitious program Constance was developing, and that I could no longer be sure that I could travel to Europe with any frequency. So I bowed out of the new venture which seems to be developing well.

One reason I went to the meeting was to work out finally the plans for the conference on the history of late 18th-century scepticism. I had been trying to find a home and financing for a four- or five-day conference at some German institution, since much of the discussion would be about developments in Germany before and after Kant. I had interested Hartmut Lehmann when he was head of the German Historical Institute in Washington. When he left I tried to interest Helmut Eckert, of the German Historical Institute in London, a post which he also left. When Prof. Lehmann became the head of the Max Planck Institute for Historical Studies at Göttingen, we began to work out a combined plan. The conference would be financed by Constance Blackwell's Foundation for Intellectual History, by the Max Planck Institute, by the UCLA Center for 17th and 18th-centuries Studies headed by Peter Reill, and by Ulrich Schneider of Leipzig. We would have two days of meetings at Leipzig, then a day moving to Göttingen, and then two days of further conference at Göttingen.

In London after the meeting at the Italian Cultural Institute, I

went off into the nearby park with Ulrich Schneider and Hans Bodeker of Göttingen to decide on the topics to be discussed and on who was to be invited. We worked for an hour or more, and when we were finished we found to our dismay that we were in a private park that was now locked. We could only exit if we had a key, which we did not. Fortunately before we were arrested for trespassing a kind woman came by and unlocked a gate and we were liberated, able to go on our ways.

Julie and I went off to Paris for a further celebration of our anniversary. We had a wonderful week, visiting friends like Elisabeth Labrousse, visiting the new Louvre, Chartres, concerts, Bastille Day. We lunched with Pierre-Francois Moreau and Jacqueline Lagrée (who had just returned from the Marsh conference). They wanted me to participate in a conference that were planning for June 1995 on the history of scepticism. So when I left Paris for home I really expected to be back the following year for two scepticism conferences in Paris and in Germany.

But I was very weary and weak on returning to California, and began to feel that I could no longer keep up my pace as a traveling scholar and wandering Jew. By early 1995 I realized that I had to cancel my appearance at the French conference on the history of scepticism, and next my appearance at the Göttingen-Leipzig conference I worked so hard to organize. Instead I stayed here organizing the *Columbia History of Western Philosophy*, a grand undertaking that required much planning to allocate available space for various topics and philosophers, and to find people to write various sections. And overlapping with this the editorial problems began which would consume much of the next two or three years.

In addition, following after the bombing in April 1995 in Oklahoma City, I began planning with David Katz in Tel Aviv a volume tracing the history of the theologies of various millennial groups including ones that had influenced McVeigh, Nichols and others. I was dismayed by the ignorance in the press about the beliefs of people killed at Waco, of the American militias, and of militant fundamentalists in general. This led to a book project on *Messianic Revolution*, which had to be researched and written over the next couple of years.

In 1995 Sarah Hutton was here for a few weeks, and then Jonathan Israel from London. This provided much stimulating contact and exchange of ideas on various topics.

Unfortunately my health got worse and worse. I went from one

respiratory infection to another with generally debilitating effect.

During 1994–95 our good friend Amos Funkenstein was diagnosed and treated for lung cancer. Each time we were in the Bay Area we visited him and saw the deterioration of his situation. When I was at the Renaissance Society meeting, in October 1995, I called Amos's wife, Esti, to ask if I should come over and visit. Amos was in the hospital, and she urged me to come as quickly as possible. I took a taxi, worried that I would come too late. Instead I found Amos in a hospital bed attached to all sorts of tubes, but anxious to discuss some matters with me. He would be very lucid about some point in Spinoza, then drift off to sleep. Awake a few moments later, and take up the discussion where he had left off. It was an amazing performance. Before I went to see him I had been asked by Peter Reill to organize a conference about Amos and his work. We realized a lot depended on whether he would be at the conference or whether it would be a memorial effort. I discussed with Amos who might come to the conference. But, when I stepped into the hall, Esti and Amos's children made clear to me that it was just a matter of days before the end. This was to be the last time I would see him.

When I got back to Los Angeles I was pretty sick. My doctor told me cheerily, you are lucky—it's not pneumonia, just a bad infection.

About two weeks later Amos passed away, and I went up again to the funeral at a cemetery north of Berkeley. Amos was a secular Jew. The service was *ad hoc*, with some elements of a Jewish funeral. Afterwards many of us gathered at the home of his widow and for four hours or so there was extremely intense intellectual discussion going on in every corner of the house. It was I thought the fitting tribute to a great intellectual. When I got back to Los Angeles I immediately started working with Bob Westman of UC San Diego on planning the Funkenstein Memorial conference.

I also returned sick once again, and again was told that I had a severe respiratory infection but no pneumonia.

Shortly thereafter I led the conference at the Clark Library on Leibniz and Religion. We opened up various aspects of Leibniz's thought and interests that had been ignored by those concentrating on his logical ideas and his rationalist philosophy. Allison Coudert had found lots of new material about Leibniz's relations to the leading Christian Kabbalists of the time. My former student Yuen Ting Lai did a fine presentation on what Leibniz made out of Chinese

philosophy. Daniel Cook explored Leibniz's contacts with the *schwärmeri*. Keith Schuchard opened up some of the threads between Leibniz and the Freemasons and Swedenborg's brother-in-law. Some "normal" Leibniz scholars asked me if this had anything to do with Leibniz's philosophy. Of course, one reason for holding the conference was to expand our vision of what constituted his philosophy. If he was really interested and concerned about all of these arcane matters, could he have been just the straight-laced rationalist of the history of philosophy texts? It was an exciting conference, and the papers are being published at the present time in the *International Archives of the History of Ideas*.

From February 9–11, 1996 we had another exciting conference bash at the Clark on "Newton and Religion". We brought together thirteen scholars to deal seriously and thoughtfully about various aspects of Newton's religious thought in the context of his time. I had been organizing this over a couple of years with Jim Force and with Ken Knoespele of Georgia Tech. Jim and I finally put it together with the financial help of the UCLA Center for 17th and 18th Century Studies. By the time of the conference I was a physical mess, and was treated by my friends at the conference as if this might well be the last time we would be together. This made it most touching, but at the same time it was also a lively, exciting, provocative conference, which I think will do much to promote further study of this side of Newton, to bring about the publication of his alchemical and theological writings, and to try to construct one Newton (as well as one Leibniz) who could have been such a great scientist and mathematician and also a great religious thinker. Sarah Hutton gave a paper showing the difference between Newton's and Henry More's interpretation of *Revelation*, and had a wonderful blow-up of Newton's diagram for Locke. Jim Force tried to show how there could be a whole Newton, scientist and theologian. Others discussed his anti-Catholicism, his place in the history of church historians, in the history of interpreters of mythology, and many other fascinating subjects. The very rich group of papers is in the page proof stage, and will be published in early 1999.

I had been invited by my former student, José Maia Neto to spend a month or more in Brazil giving seminars on scepticism. No final commitment was made because I was always too sick to undertake the long journey. Finally when José had to have a definite answer, I decided I had better cancel the invitation, and suggest that he

invite Red Watson instead. Another invitation I kept postponing was to visit Puerto Rico to join the Philosophy Department of the University of Puerto Rico in celebrating René Descartes's 400th birthday. Because of illness I kept putting off my arrival. During this period I received an invitation to take part in a colloquium on scepticism at the Collège de France in June, the first day of which would be devoted to my work. My doctor felt I had to go, and that I could make the Puerto Rico trip a trial run. We agreed to try to do the trip to Puerto Rico in small stages, two hours flying at a time—to Dallas, the next day to New Orleans, and then to Miami and San Juan. I would have oxygen on the plane for each leg of the journey, and would have ample rest. I carried a rich pharmacopia in case of trouble. At the same time careful preparations for a leisurely trip to Paris, via New York, London and then Paris were designed.

I left in early April. Julie flew separately to join me there. I was slightly sick and took an antibiotic. By the time I got to San Juan I was fairly sick, and managed to give three talks, and to see the marvels of old San Juan and to meet the philosophers there, a couple of whom I had met at other conferences. When I got back as far as New Orleans I had great lung congestion, coughing, and lots of other symptoms. The next morning I suddenly was gasping, unable to breathe. My doctor had given me an envelope of pills to take immediate if I had trouble breathing. I took them, got over the crisis, and went off to Dallas and on to Los Angeles on the same day, got someone to take me in a wheelchair to a cab and went home encased in my symptoms. Julie was by then in Washington taking care of one of our grandchildren for the week.

When I saw my doctor I was told that I did not have pneumonia, but rather massive fluid in my lungs. I was given a diuretic to drain the fluid. The doctor and his nurse begged me, cajoled me, tried to force me, to move into the hospital. I was afraid Julie would never find me, and I would be languishing for an indefinite period in St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica. Instead I mainly stayed in bed, got weaker and weaker from the fluids draining out of me. It was a very dark several days. Occasionally I would manage to cross our apartment and send out an e-mail message to somebody, and I would go out to get food.

I did not know how bad my condition was, and what the prognosis was. When I next saw the doctor, my oxygen-blood level was measured and was found to be "unsatisfactory". Immediately I was

put on oxygen supplement. An oxygen compressor was installed in our bedroom, and I was attached to it twenty-four hours a day by a fifty foot plastic tube. My whole world was now within that radius. The Paris trip was cancelled much to the unhappiness of the organizers and myself.

I was mainly bedridden, coughing, wheezing, under much medication. In the midst of the early stage of this when I was only awake in fits and starts, I received a phone call from the former president of the University of California congratulating me on being elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. I hardly knew what this was about and gave the phone to Julie. The next day a bill for one hundred dollars membership dues came, so it was real.

It only too quickly became obvious to me that I was extremely weak, tired, unable to concentrate on my scholarly projects. I had no idea how long this phase would go on, and whether I would have to adjust to new life attached to the blue plastic tube that kept getting caught on furniture, and kept tripping up everyone including myself. I withdrew from events in the near future such as conference in Tucson on the Kabbalah, and the colloquium in Paris on scepticism.

I was given a portable oxygen tank, on rollers, to use when I went to the doctor's office. In May I was allowed out for my first scholarly duty, presiding over the Board meeting of the Journal of the History of Philosophy at which I was retiring as President. The meeting was held in a hotel in Westwood, and I arrived with my oxygen tank. It would be the first time since my collapse that I would have to function for four or five hours and concentrate on sometimes intricate business. I survived and returned home exhausted.

A few weeks later I was supposed to take part in the memorial conference for Amos Funkenstein that Bob Westman and I had organized at the Clark Library. The first hurdle was to write my paper, the first scholarly undertaking since my collapse. I managed to write a paper comparing Amos's conception of how scepticism became embedded in modern philosophy with my own. At the conference I had my oxygen tank plus a reserve one. The tank lasted about six to eight hours. In the beginning of this new life changing tanks was a horrendous operation. At home I was assisted by a very kind neighbor who had been an engineer in the US space program. He would struggle for half an hour or so. When he had to be away, he fret-

ted about how I would manage. I found if I tilted the tank while installing it, it became relatively easy.

After the Funkenstein conference in June 1996 I had much time to try to adjust to my new situation. I made a video of a talk to be presented at the Paris conference on scepticism, making it in the drawing room of the Clark Library. With assistants I started making progress on the *Columbia History of Western Philosophy* and on the book on *Messianic Revolution*. I had difficulty going to the library because of the logistic problem of getting myself and my tank from the car to the library. At events at the Clark I found it completely exhausting to drag my tank across the property, and even just to walk up a mild grade.

The medical developments were not good. I went from one respiratory infection to another. I was slowly adjusting to the possibility of no longer being a travelling scholar, an academic wandering Jew, and just being confined to my home and my computer. I worked at half or a quarter speed.

At the end of 1996 we wanted very much to attend the ceremony for the unveiling of Amos Funkenstein's tombstone at Berkeley. After much medical consultation, it was decided to try it by car, carrying lots of oxygen tanks. We got there in two installments. Julie had to do all of the driving. We stayed for two days, and headed back home. Later we learned something that has been important ever since. The company that supplies the oxygen tanks would place them and an oxygen compressor in any hotel we designated if we gave them enough notice. This led to our being able to take short outings, two hours or so from home, and to stay overnight.

1997 began with a conference organized by the son Jeremy and myself on the abbé Henri Grégoire, who had been an interest of ours going back twenty or thirty years. Once I had been able with the collaboration of Leonora Cohen Rosenfield to organize a session on Grégoire at the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. Jeremy and I had tried several times to create enough interest. Grégoire played a monumental role in the French Revolution, and he advocated the emancipation of the Jews, and the blacks. He fought for all sorts of good liberal causes, but has been ignored in French history because he was a renegade Catholic priest-rejected by Catholic historians and socialist ones. In 1989 in the French celebrations of the Revolution he finally got some recognition, a postage

stamp in his honor and interment in the Pantheon. Jeremy had been there and got to know some of the new people working on Grégoire. So, we proposed a conference before my illness set in to Peter Reill, who was happy to include it in the Clark series. We had scholars from France, Germany, and America. I managed to write a paper on an old interest of mine, Grégoire's connections with the project in early 19th-century America to build a Jewish state off Buffalo. It was an exciting conference with lots of new material and with of discussion formal and informal in the benign ambiance of the Clark. We dined in Malibu along the coast, and then the next day had a reception at our home. At the reception I became so exhausted, that I realized we could not do that any more.

The big events of 1997 were to include a trip to the philosophers' meeting in Berkeley where I was to be honored by the Journal of the History of Philosophy, and the start of a conference series at the Clark, five conferences on the Millennium. I was appointed Clark Professor for the second time in order to do this.

The affair in Berkeley was scheduled for late March. All during the winter I kept having one respiratory infection after another, and was not in good shape. We debated whether we could drive to Berkeley in two installments. Julie was hesitant since she would have to do all of the driving again. I was sick, ready to throw in the towel, and say I was sorry but I could not do it. Somebody suggested the train, using the handicapped compartment for people like me, with a bed, private toilet, room service. The trip from Los Angeles was eleven to twelve hours starting at nine a.m. We did it with lots of oxygen tanks. When we arrived late at night at the Hotel Claremont, an oxygen compressor had been installed in our room. We were given a handicapped room with lots of railings. In the course of going around dragging my oxygen tank I met a woman, Anita Silvers, who was in a motorized wheelchair running the whole philosophers' conference. She went everywhere, flying in her condition. I realized that it was possible for me to get beyond the limits of my oxygen tanks and a very circumscribed world. She gave us details about what sort of equipment to look for, and what assistance was now available under the Aid for Disabilities Act.

The reception and the dinner honoring me were most touching. We saw many old friends, former students and colleagues. The talks at the dinner were very heart-warming. I was given a gold watch and Julie a gold bracelet. My former secretary, now Mary Davies

Scott, Federal Judge in Little Rock, had planned and managed the arrangements. By the time it was over I had the feeling that I would not be able attend further Board meetings since the logistics were so complicated. It was decided that the next Board meeting would be in Los Angeles in 1998 which would not be so difficult.

After the meeting we enjoyed the facilities of the Claremont and I even managed to swim in their great pool. We went home by train, and decided to explore the possibility of making a trip east in October to Washington, D.C. by train to visit much of our family who live in that area, and to look into the possibility of moving there. If I was really so limited in what I could do, and so much of the burden of caring for me and transporting me fell on Julie's shoulders, it might be helpful to be in a family circle where our children and later our grandchildren could share some of the burden. And I could probably use the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Library of Congress since they had access from the street for me and my oxygen tanks.

We made desultory inquiries into motorized wheelchairs and handicapped access at UCLA. I was still able during the summer of 1997 to drive myself to Clark Library, and to use an office in a side building which required no staircase climbing or crossing a slightly graded lawn. I worked there a good deal with my assistant, Anna Suranyi, on preparing the final text of the volume of essays by Tonelli, Olaso and myself, *Scepticism in the Enlightenment*, and going over the copyedited version of the *Columbia History of Western Philosophy*. Anna and I found some startling changes by the copyeditor including adding some false information into the text. This required sending it all back to Columbia to send the articles to the authors for their scrutiny.

Late in the summer of 1997 I met a British historian of political thought, Sally Jenkinson. She was teaching a summer session course at UCLA. She insisted on meeting me on my own turf, at Mort's Deli around the corner from our condo. She arrived in a wheelchair, wheeling herself down the street. We spent some delightful hours with her and Chris Laursen discussing this and that. We had many friends and many interests in common. When I met her I was deep in the dumps about whether I could ever go any place any more. And here she was, a polio victim unable to walk since age 30, who was going everywhere. She had organized her life so that she could go and participate. She really inspired me to find out how I could emerge from my gloom and again take part in intellectual

activities. Sally was here again this year, and was amazed to see how much I had changed, partly due to her inspiration and encouragement and example.

During the summer I was organizing the five Clark lectures, partly by getting co-chairs for some of them, Matt Goldish for the one on Jewish Messianism which would start the series in November 1997, Jim Force who would arrange most of the speakers for the third one on English Protestant Millenarianism, and my son Jeremy who took charge of the last one on Millenarianism and Revolution. I did most of the work on the conference on Catholic Millenarianism and another on Contiental Millenarianism.

As we approached the fall and the Clark conference season I realized I had to have physical help. My eyesight was no longer good enough to drive the freeways comfortably. I was examined by UCLA's leading glaucoma specialist who thought my case was under control. But as the year progressed I had more and more trouble seeing, and reading. I needed strong magnifying glasses to read the newspaper, and usually only read the headlines. My younger daughter sent me a couple of mystery stories in large type print, and I thought this is the direction I was heading. I had eyeglasses made which were just two strong magnifying glasses. I no longer could read my computer writings unless they were made bold type and triple spaced. Julie's assistant managed to make all of the incoming e-mail bold type.

We made the trip in October to Washington by train. Julie did the Chicago to Washington portion with me, and I did the rest alone. I was in a kind of splendor in my handicapped compartment, with a seventy pound oxygen tank sitting in the middle of it. The trip was dull but manageable except for some unexpected scares when we could not find the oxygen tank in the Los Angeles railroad station, and when the company delivered the wrong kind of tank on the return trip in Washington. Each crisis got resolved but with lots of anxiety. The trip involved many hours lay over in Chicago. But helpful porters moved the oxygen equipment from train to waiting room to train. In Washington we spent about two weeks seeing lots of relatives and meeting our newly arrived adopted granddaughter from Korea, Rachel Tang Popkin Hall.

I realized I could travel by train hither and yon if I could find some way of overcoming the logistics of shipping the oxygen back and forth. So, I began contemplating further such travel across the

country, and maybe by ship across the ocean. The cost was very great, more than going first class on an airplane, but at least I could see that I did not have to be a stationary scholar in Los Angeles.

Back home my new assistant, Tim Correll who is the boyfriend of my former assistant, Anna, started driving me to the Clark Library. We went together to look for a motorized wheelchair to rent for use at the Clark conferences. Julie had scouted stores near St. John's Hospital where my doctors are located. We rented a large wheelchair for the first conference. Tim could take it apart. It had batteries weighing more than thirty pounds each. It could be disassembled, and put in his car, and taken to the Clark and reassembled there. The Clark Library had already built an access lane from the parking lot to the library, which is located on a platform reached by steps. They even went so far as to put a sloping ramp from the entrance into the glorious conference room.

For the first conference in November 1997 we got the wheelchair to the Clark, reassembled it, and I drove to the library building in it, and took it into the conference room. Tim brought in oxygen tanks, and we were ready for action. The first conference dealt with Jewish Messianic theories from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century. Matt Goldish had assembled an excellent group of scholars from Israel and America. We had very lively discussions about how various Jewish messianic views developed. I managed to write a paper about some English and French accounts of the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi. The French account I had come across in the Clark Library which had somehow acquired a German translation of the French account. This in contrast to the three English ones was very anti-semitic, and was probably the fullest account that existed until that of Gershom Scholem in the twentieth century. I could not read my paper, so gave it basically from memory. Julie had gotten me some halogen lamps at home, and I could read with them and my magnifying eye-glasses, but not from ordinary lighting.

I had only known about half of the speakers at the first conference previously. There is always a frightening possibility that they may not get along, and that blood will flow. So, I was most pleasantly surprised that from the very beginning everybody seemed very happy with each other, with the situation, with the formal and informal nature of the conference. The Clark chemistry worked again, and a very productive conference resulted. People presented new

and exciting findings and interpretations. Matt Goldish and I are editing the conference papers, and hope to have them out next year.

The motorized wheelchair proved to be too large for our apartment, so it had to be returned. Tim and I would find something more manageable for the next conference due in January. Before that I had been asked by David Myers, the head of Jewish Studies at UCLA, to give a keynote address at a conference he was arranging on the Marranos. Because of illness, and the pressure of time to write a paper for the occasion, I kept putting off making a final commitment. Just a few days before the event I told David Myers I would come, and with oxygen tank in hand, gave a paper. I had written it out in tripled spaced bold type, but when the time came, I was again not able to read it, so I gave most of it from memory.

In January a conference was held in Paris at the Centre Alexandre Koyré called "Journée Richard Popkin". Eight French scholars gave papers concerning my work on scepticism. The French translation of my book seems to have generated a lot of interest in various areas of intellectual concern in France. Unfortunately I could not attend. I have only seen three of the papers. All of the papers are being published in the *Revue de Synthèse* later this year. I have written a brief piece to accompany the collection of essays. For the January Clark conference Tim and I rented a wheelchair scooter, like the one the prosecutor in the McVeigh trial used. The store that rented it to me mentioned, which nobody had raised earlier, the possibility that Medicare would pay for the wheelchair scooter, and the rentals. My doctor knew nothing about this. The store gave me the forms, the doctor had to certify my condition, and in a couple of months I was the proud owner of shiny blue wheelchair scooter, put out by the PRIDE company. This could fit in our hallway. It has a maximum speed of five miles an hour and it has a horn. I used it to go to nearby stores and restaurants. Tim would take it apart for transportation to the Clark. I became a familiar sight there with the blue wheelchair scooter buzzing around the property.

As the conferences proceeded from January on Catholic Millenarianism, February on English Protestant Millenarianism, March Continental Millenarianism, and April Millenarianism and Revolution, my health got worse and worse. My eyesight was growing dimmer. I could not read the papers of the participants, which were sent in in advance; I became less and less able to recognize people from any distance, even two feet. I was so exhausted after each set of

conferences, I was bedridden for two or three days. Many of the participants were old friends, former students, former colleagues, who really thought that this was the last time they would ever see me. My respiratory doctor kept indicating matters were getting worse, and that I could expect further deterioration. My mother and her sister's husband had developed emphysema which got worse and worse, so I knew what to expect and was expecting it.

Nonetheless I was very pleased that each set of conferences went off very very well. The interaction of the participants was very stimulating. There seemed to be a magic in each conference. I participated partly by making comments throughout, and by filling in when necessary if someone had dropped out. Some very exciting new research was presented by Martin Mulrow of Munich and by Susanna Åkerman of Stockholm. David Katz stayed for a week to consult with me on our book on *Messianic Revolution*. It was all very heady, but I and everyone else thought it was my finale. At the last conference I gave what I considered a farewell address, and Peter Reill and my son gave me tributes, speaking as if the old scholar would hang up his footnotes and fade away. I was not going to organize conferences on anything any more.

This was my serious expectation. And I thought we would have to move to Washington for me to do my fading away in the bosom of my family. Julie was going to Washington in June to see about housing possibilities. I made arrangements with Peter Reill and Bruce Whiteman to donate my library to the Clark, because I felt they were most likely to have readers interested in my areas of scholarly concern over the years to come.

With all of this deserved pessimism, I was in a steady depressed state about my future as a scholar and as a living being. I still had three publisher's contracts to fulfill, one to do half of a new text book with Avrum Stroll for Oxford, the second to compile an anthology of sceptical writings from ancient times to the present, the third, the final edition of my history of scepticism, this time from Savonarola to Pierre Bayle's article on Savonarola, which Oxford is to publish. This would keep me busy as life became more and more restricted.

Then, much to everyone's surprise some health changes occurred. My ophthalmologist had gotten alarmed in early April when I came in for a check-up and could not even see where the eye chart was. He prescribed a pill to drain the fluid behind the eyes, and just warned me that it could have strange side effects. I had started taking

the pill the week before the last Clark conference. The following Monday, when I was supposed to get checked up, Julie asked me if she should drive me. I looked up, and said why, I can see. Then I realized the significance of what I had said. I could actually see. I could make out much more of the newspaper. I could see across the room clearly. So, I set off by car to Santa Monica to see the ophthalmologist. He was pleasantly surprised that I had improved so much. He prescribed new eyeglasses, no longer magnifying glasses. I took them into an optometry store, and they were amazed. They had made the magnifying eyeglasses. They could not believe this was for me. With the new eyeglasses I could drive rather easily, except that I am still fearful of trying the freeways again, and I have some difficulty with driving into the sun.

Once I was mobile again I started exploring ways of getting around with my wheelchair scooter and my oxygen tanks. My doctor's office had no information, but the medical supply store that had supplied the scooter told me of something called "Access", a public service that transports handicapped people from point A to B. When I called them, they scheduled me for an interview with scooter and oxygen in a hospital in downtown Los Angeles. I was picked up in a van which had been hollowed out to make room for people like me and my equipment. I could drive right into the van, and then drive off later. At the hospital interview I managed to knock over the furniture in the interview office, but nonetheless was accepted as a handicapped person eligible for transportation. They said they needed five hours notice before each trip, which would require careful planning each day. Before I got to use their service, I was called by someone who redesigned vans for handicapped people. He came and showed me how a Ford van could be remade, for around \$40,000. Before I took this seriously I learned from our computer repair person that his ex-wife had gotten a hoist that could lift a wheelchair into a van, and this cost just one or two thousand more than the van. I was overwhelmed with this new possibility which would make it possible for me to come and go as I pleased. The hoist installer was a garage in Long Beach, who told me that a Dodge van was best for his purposes, since the back opening was a bit wider. Next we rushed off to the nearest Dodge dealer, bought a nice new white van, took it to Long Beach for the hoist installation. My friend Andrew Charwhat, a mechanical engineer at UCLA, checked the

whole procedure. He made a new lift for the hoist that I could manage more easily, and a frame for carrying the oxygen tank attached to the scooter. So I was already to go hither and yon. Tim and I took the apparatus and van to UCLA, and I was able to unload the wheel chair scooter and drive over to the library, the first time I been there in almost two years. I drove around the stacks, got some books, returned to the van, loaded the scooter in, and returned home. Julie and I took it to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, got it up the handicapped elevator, drove to the cafeteria for lunch, went to an exhibit, and then when we wanted to leave, the handicapped elevator was not in service. The LA County Museum's other entrance is a long staircase, not fit for scooter or myself. So another crisis. Finally we had to be taken down a secret elevator, secret from patrons, but used by employees, and then through a maze of corridors, and finally to the outside world.

So by June 1998 I had the equipment for a new mobile life. Then another surprise occurred. When I had my periodic lung check-up, I was breathing much better than usual. The doctor was surprised, and put me through a thorough lung function examination to see what my situation was. I blew into all sorts of tubes, and finally was told I was doing much much better, and that I did not need to use oxygen during the daytime. No more oxygen tanks to lug around. The doctor told me that the test showed that I was better than I had been for four and half years. I found I could walk more easily, without oxygen; I could go up stairs. And I no longer needed the wheelchair scooter or the raft of oxygen tanks that are in our hallway. The doctor said I could try a short airplane ride. So after a summer of company from our children and grandchildren, Julie and I flew to San Francisco for a four-day holiday. It worked out wonderfully. We stayed in the Hyatt Regency, and went to two museums, the theater, and two dinners, more than I had undertaken recent years. Since I no longer needed oxygen (except at night while sleeping), and needed no assistance in seating, we could go to the theater, movies, etc. without logistics problems. I was checked up the day after we returned from the San Francisco trip, and all was well. The good doctor now said I could try a cross country plane trip and maybe next year a transatlantic one. We will go east in December. I have been invited to give a talk at the Institute for Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania after the

winter holidays. The family will all gather in Washington to celebrate my son Jeremy's fiftieth birthday and my seventy-fifth on the 27th of December.

When I started writing this, I thought it would end in the darkest gloom, a farewell to my scholarly life. Now I am a bit euphoric, a Lazarus-like experience has occurred. My doctors disagree as to what has happened. The ophthalmologist thinks that the medication that is draining the fluids behind the eye is also draining fluids elsewhere in my body including my lungs. My respiratory doctor wants to believe it is due to his good care and treatment. Both deserve a Nobel Prize in medicine as does their resurrected patient, who will now go on exploring various problems in the intellectual history of the modern world. I have no idea if the present improvement in my health will continue, but I would like to keep exploring the precise role of ancient sceptical arguments in the development of modern philosophy, and the role of modern Jewish ideas in 17th and 18th-century thought. I hope this will lead to a fuller understanding of Spinoza's unique position and how it affected the development of irreligious thought. Everything connects, as has been said, and hopefully all of this will lead to comprehension of our present intellectual situation. If I have the time and energy, I should like to explore the super radical kinds of scepticism that seem to be developing among postmodernists, and among the extremely very conservative Christian Reconstructionists. And, God willing, I should like to be able to spend some time thinking through my own spiritual beliefs, and my position vis-à-vis Judaism and Israel. In the growing rush to adapt more and more traditional Jewish practices, I think the great values espoused by secular socialist Jews in the period before World War II need to be asserted again as a way of providing hope for a better future.

So, there is still much to be done, much to be thought about. Whether it will still be connected with or involved with the conference framework which has been so productive for me, I do not now know.

Richard H. Popkin
Pacific Palisades, California
October 1, 1998

SUSANNA ÅKERMAN

Conferring with Dick Popkin

I first got to know Dick Popkin when he was my Doctoral Dissertation Director at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. I remember that I was finding so many facts of such a seemingly disparate nature that I believed that I could never make sense of them. Dick, however, was always able to set them into their proper perspective. When some obscure figure appeared in my research material, Dick was always able to draw upon his vast knowledge and to make a plausible case that she or he was to be considered together with other movements and ideas. "Everything connects in the end," he said. His good humored approach greatly facilitated my thesis writing and set a long-to-be-remembered ideal in research. In my particular studies of often overlooked figures of the Northern Renaissance, many of whom were connected to the court of Queen Christina of Sweden, I have striven to live up to his ideal. I have had the pleasure of introducing portions of my work at some of the wonderful conferences which Dick has organized for specialist scholars, e.g., at the conference he set up at The Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Wassenaar in 1990, where his low-key charm and unique ability to show connections was readily apparent to all in attendance.

STIERNHIELM PYTHAGORIZANS AND THE UNVEILING OF ISIS

Susanna Åkerman

Section 1. Introduction

In 1653, Georg Stiernhielm, the poet, was sent from Sweden to Wasula in Ingria to work on the border dispute with Russia. At about this time he had started to polish his ideas for a system of language.¹ Stiernhielm, or Jöran Lilia as his name then was, published a thesis, *De Jure raptu et bigamia commentatio* (Dorpat, 1636), that, its theme notwithstanding, was not intended as a provocation.²

Stiernhielm (1598–1672) brought to Dorpat a vast learning which he had culled from lectures at Uppsala between 1610 and 1615, where he first enrolled with the Hebraist and Aristotelian Johannes Rudbeckius. From 1615 until 1623, Stiernhielm studied government at Greifswald. In 1625, he travelled to France and beyond, a perigrination for which his ties in high places had opened the doors. In 1631, Stiernhielm worked as a local judge at Wasula in Livonia, and handled difficult cases of sorcery, slander, and malice. To soothe his mind he exercised the art of iambic-alexandrinic verse. In 1643 he published an *Heroisch Fägnesong* signed with his astro-poetical pseudonym “Stellata de Casside.”³

Seeking to break away from his earlier legal career, Stiernhielm now left for Holland where he refined his macaronian lyrics by absorbing the dramatic poetry of Jacob Cats and broadened the basis of his thesis concerning a possible direct linguistic kinship of Gothic, the old Scandinavian tongue, and Aramaic.⁴

¹ Per Wieselgren, “Stiernhielms Wasula-arkiv”, *Svio-Estonica* 19, pp. 3–33 och “Juridiska Stiernhielmiana”, *Svio-Estonica* 20, pp. 59–83.

² *Svensk Biografisk Uppslagsbok*, “Stiernhielm, Georg”. Birger Swartling, *Georg Stiernhielm—hans liv och verksamhet* (Uppsala, 1909), pp. 34–35, citing Fr. Bienemann, “Ein Tumult in Dorpat A:o 1641,” *Baltische Monatsschrift*, 1900.

³ Sten Lindroth, “Stiernhielms studier i Uppsala,” *Lychnos* (1954–55), pp. 291–5. Swartling, *Georg Stiernhielm*, pp. 22–3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 110. “Jöran Stiernhielm i Holland” *Historisk Tidskrift* (1906).

To increase his status, Stiernhielm planned to produce a special work, *Mysterium Etymologium Regni cancellario Axel Oxenstierna revelatum et consecratum* (1644). Brilliance in crafting epigrams and sonnets had prepared him for more direct favours at court. His useful system of hydrostatic measurements in metallurgy, *Archimedes Reformatus* (Stockholm, 1643), won approval from the Chancellor; in blue vellum covers it contains a poem on a silk worm whose life of hard labor in weaving a world is brightened by the rising sun. A contemporary reader has made a note in ink beside the sun, "S. R. M." meaning the brightly shining, but adolescent, Queen.⁵

Section 2. A System of Music—the Vibrating Numbers in Motion

In his Archimedean treatise, Stiernhielm briefly spoke of the World Soul and the Pythagorean view of the cosmos as built by divine number. He extolled the harmony produced in "God's singular building" through proportion, order, and measure. Profoundly influenced by spiritual poetry, he cited Xenocrates' view of the soul, "the number that gains motion from itself."⁶

Some years later, Stiernhielm revealed more exactly what this phrase meant for him. In the Pythagorean system of music, harmonic numbers are generated from the prime intervals in the three perfect musical concords: diapason, diapente, and diatessaron, viz., the modern octave, fifth, and fourth. Each major tone emerges as the difference (8/9) between a 5th and 4th. On a monal cord, these tones are generated at exact spatial intervals. An impulse thus measurably rebounds:

⁵ *Archimedes Reformatus—Serinissimae Reginae Christinae Consecratus* (Stockholm, 1653), marginal note in the copy at Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, Stockholm.

⁶ *Numerus Harmonio Platonico facilis et artificiosa genesi . . . Claves musicat* (2 pages) Ms. Fd. 13, Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm. The poem *Harpa Mathematica* is listed in *Svivo-Estonica* 19, see note 1 above.

		intende	4	3	4
G2	Diatessaron	remitte	3	4	3
Diapason	C3		Mp.	Mp.	Dp.
G4	Diapente	intende	3	2	3
		remitte	2	3	2

Or, as Stiernhielm comments with reference to Plutarch's treatise on music, "this follows from the Pythagorean and Platonic principles of the Monad and the Dyad," calling attention to the esoteric interplay between oblong and square numbers. While Stiernhielm's explanatory poem *Harpa Mathematica sive Lyra Proportionalis* seems to be lost, the contextual background of renaissance musical theory seems to confirm the interpretation that his views possibly stem from Giuseffo Zarlino's lectures on the enharmonic scale, the *Institutioni Harmonice* (Venice, 1558). Zarlino states:

Human music . . . is that which mingles the incorporeal energy of reason with the body, it is nothing other than a certain adaption or temperament as of low and high voices making a kind of consonance . . . even so in music one cannot hear the space between the high and the low voice when they sing; one can conceive of it but not hear it . . . this harmony can again be recognized in the division of the soul: the intellect, the senses, and the habitual autonomous functions. According to Ptolemy, these correspond to the ratios of three consonances: the octave, fifth, and fourth. . . . For these things will temper each other in the same way as a consonance will make high and low notes agree.⁷

Within the framework of human music (exemplified by the Phrygian scale DAEB FCGD), Stiernhielm assigns material principles (further explained below) to the intervals generated by the monal cord, thus:

Semen	2	27
Spiritus Cubica Hinc dici pr. Hominis radix		
Forma	3	9
Erit Nrq hominis 729 6 Cubi-Quadratus		

⁷ Giuseffo Zarlino, "On Musica Humana" pp. 134–5 in Jocelyn Godwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic—A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987). See also Ernest G. McClain, *The Pythagorean Plato—Prelude to the Song Itself* (York Beach, Main: Weiser, 1978).

Stiernhielm's development is controlled by the progression of numbers taught in *Timaeus* 36a (1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 8, 27), i.e., with the 9 before the 8, indicating primacy of place for what has been called the "supertrinity of the Egyptian ennead": $3 \cdot 3 \cdot 3 = 27$. The "human number" reached, 729, is explained in the *Republic* 587e, where Plato asserts that the just man "lives 729 times more pleasantly than the Tyrant." This image of the "just" tuning of the soul derives from Plato's tonal theory of numbers which is generated on a circular 12-tone scale. On such a circular scale, there are six rotations through each tonal fifth, from a C to the next C. The number of rotations through all possible fifths, spanning all the possible tones on the scale, therefore is 729. This number thus signifies all the tones of a well-tempered scale and is the formal number of the emanation from the One: the World Soul. Stiernhielm's use of the Phrygian scale DAEB FGCD is consequential because in the *Republic* this scale is offered as a tuning appropriate to the Guardians.

Now, from the above equation Stiernhielm goes a step further:

Cubicus quadrati

Seminis

q est Symphonia Natura Spiritus 3 27 Homo Cubus 729

Forma

Anima Platonis

A stable harmonic structure is finally reached, called:

Corpus Naalis quadrata

Corpus Naalis

27. Vita

2 729 Homo

Harmone

The construction of the image of a 729 cubit volume ($9 \cdot 9 \cdot 9$) to represent human proportion, or tuning, makes use of "seeds" as effective principles of nature. The idea of "vital kernels" acting as an informing substance, or a formative pattern, grows out of neo-Stoic or Paracelsian thought, here probably the former. The elements in the first stage of reaching a full human proportion, as a sort of "Symphonia Natura," joins with the "Corpus Naturalis quadrata" ($9 \cdot 9$). Given its seminal status, the final cubic form is perhaps

meant as a sort of (monozygotic) encoding for human genetic material.

These notes, from Uppsala, are dated 15 November 1653, and one can infer that Stiernhielm's understanding had grown out of discussions with the Italian court musicians, such as the Queen's personal aide Alessandro Cecconi.⁸ Earlier, there had been several continental theorists at court writing on Greek musical theory: Marcus Meibom on the Pyrrhic dance and Gabriel Naudé who, through Marin Mersenne, had participated in the philosophic debate on musical harmonies engendered by Johannes Kepler's *Harmonices mundi* (1619).

Section 3. Pythagorean Linguistics

His own system was worked out in fragments. His first sketch bears the title: *Fistula panos, Septem compacta ciculus—Lyra Apollinis Harmonia date, in Nuptiis cum Cadmo; hic est Symphonia Naturae*. Here, he spells out the principles for the mixture of elements, the creation out of a primordial chaos, the "hylè" of the Greeks. He finds that these principles were imparted to Pythagoras by the northern philosopher Orpheus. Later, they reached Empedocles, Democritos, Chrysippos, and Zeno, whose Stoic doctrine abstracts the creation schemes Plato and Aristotle. Stiernhielm planned to give a table of conceptual principles involved in the Pythagorean progression: monas, dyas, trius. He showed that this triad was equivalent to the trinity Deus, Materia, Lux found in most mythologies. For example in the Persian triad: Mithra, Ariman, Oromaz. These principles could even be represented as a quaternion (Cornu Panos) generated in the form of a pyramid, emanating from a primeval source.⁹ Stiernhielm tried to capture a notion of the potential movement in things, arranged according to essence, essential modes, and substance:

⁸ In 1653, Cecconi was sent to Florence with a commission to copy interesting manuscripts. See Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and Her Circle: The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), p. 97.

⁹ "Dua Opposita contraria," Ms. Fd. 4:5, f. 46v, 22v. Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

	unum	posse		perpetuere solere
essentia	bonum	agere	essendi modi	
	verum	habere dare		debere decernere
	Mens			
substantia	Lux	= lucere, celere, spirare, movere		
	Materia	= quieta, recepienda, humida, frigida		

The action of mind is linked to Lux in terms of movement, as with the taking of breath, or poetic inspiration (spirare). Stiernhielm refers to the notion of light in Zabarella's "De Mente Agente," a commentary on the last pages of Plato's sixth book of the *Republic*. In his various systems, Stiernhielm strove to incorporate ideas on the creation of matter and light from Zabarella, Lipsius, and Jean D'Espagnet. He also tried to reach a popular audience through an illustrated catalogue depicting a system of theosophy (similar to that of Robert Fludd) entitled *Schema Demonstrativa Philosophiae primae* (Stockholm, 1650). The manual is very interesting because it gives a pictorial framework for the philosophical elements that he later worked out. It is composed of fourteen images depicting the stages of creation through a confluence of linguistic principles and the heat of the sun. They were proof-printed in a limited edition. Almost nothing is known, however, of how they were received by the readership.

Stiernhielm's later fragments contain the titles: *Monile Minerva, vera & genuina Naturae Principia, rerumque Genesim & ordinem exhibuens* (1651); *Umbra Sapientiae divinae & humanae* (1652); the *Arachnae Minerva Arctoe* (1653); and the more distinct and enigmatic *Peplum Minerva Arctoe* (1653) (i.e., "the cloak of Minerva unveiled").¹⁰

As Johan Nordström points out, the background of these pursuits is set out in Plutarch's collection of Egyptian myths, *Of Isis and Osiris*. Stiernhielm had become particularly captivated by the report of the inscription on the walls of the Temple of Isis at Memphis: "I know all that there is, all that have been, and all that will be; but as of

¹⁰ For other titles and versions, e.g., *Peplum Minervae in quo sub specie intextu telae Arachnae adumbratur Philosophia et Theologia hoc est Sapientia vetus et nova* (Januari 1652), see Swartling, *Georg Stiernhielm* pp. x–xi and Johan Nordström, *Georg Stiernhielm*, (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1924), 2:2, pp. 205–15.

yet, no one has torn off (detexit) my cloak (peplum)."¹¹ To tear aside this cloak, to unveil the goddess of Isis, was Stiernhielm's burning desire and what better object for vain devotion was there than the Swedish Queen, who was moved so easily by incantations to Minerva? Sensing Queen Christina's resistance to royal marriage, Stiernhielm saw, however, that he should abandon the titles referring to a wedding of Lux and Matter and instead concentrate on the formative power of Mind. But, Stiernhielm, apparently, did not have the ability to win the Queen's support. In the spring of 1654, just before the departure of the Queen, he wrote the bitter and sarcastic epigram:

Femina nulla sapit nec erat nisi ficta Minerve
Textrix non Rectrix, si qua Minerva fuit.

("No woman is wise and Minerva was only a fiction.
If there was any Minerva, she was a weaver, not a
sovereign").¹²

Section 4. Lux and Psychosophia: The Pythagorean System

The fragmented manuscript for the *Monile Minerva* shows that Stiernhielm also sought to deepen his ideas from Robert Fludd through readings of Ficino's annotations to Plotinus' *Enneads*, book five, especially chapter nine, and to the Hermetic Pimander.¹³ The necklace of the title, the chain of Minerva or the "hormon" of the Greeks, was presented as a thick three layered bronze necklace in old northern style. The necklace presents an unusual number of eighteen hypostases between man and God, running crisscross from Lux, Mind, and Matrix (5 plus 12 links).¹⁴ Stiernhielm finally wrote a dialogue, *Gnothi seaiton vocum Pythian, Umbra Sapientia Divinae et Humanae*. The different turns taken by Simplicius and Astraeus in the dialogue expresses the system in an accessible courtly form.¹⁵

Stiernhielm probably developed his ideas further at the Stockholm

¹¹ Nordström, *Georg Stiernhielm*, 2:2.

¹² Per Wieselgren, *Stiernhielms bref och smärre skrifter* (Stockholm, 1924), p. 616.

¹³ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen Mackenna, 5:9 on intellectual principles, "the principle whose beauty is selfspringing."

¹⁴ Reprinted in Nordström, *Georg Stiernhielm*, original Ms. Fd. 5 in Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

¹⁵ Nordström, *Georg Stiernhielm*, original in Uppsala UB. Stiernhielm is thinking of Astraeus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

court academy between 1649 and 1651. While there is no formal record that he met with Descartes there, Stiernhielm is on the list of participants in the first Academy at court in the winter of 1649–50. Such discussions were increasingly important to Stiernhielm after his disappointment in the winter of 1650 with the turgid, neo-Stoic, Cartesian system which he scorned as “philosophare sine mente,” (i.e., “philosophical without mind”). Similarly, Stiernhielm regarded Aristotle’s system as an arid philosophizing “sine mente et luce.”¹⁶ Needed in all systems, Stiernhielm thought, is an animating fever, a vibrant soul, and he chose to call it “Lux.” Central to its production is the spoken word, language bent over itself and then pronounced. This relationship is made precisely clear in his arrangement of a wheel in his *Philosophia Muta—philosophia barbara indocta*, through which the fallen angel Lucifer reigns over a mute and sterile world.

Section 5. Idiotam Dialogo de Mente: Maa, Naa, Rao, and Aia

In spite of his resistance to Cartesian ideas, Stiernhielm’s scientific focus is perhaps best revealed by his own comment on a letter of Descartes to Marin Mersenne dated 30 July 1640 in which Descartes examines chemical process. Descartes begins by stating his view of the soul as seated in the pineal gland and then describes how matter operates in the plenum. Descartes doubts that there could be a void filled with indivisible atoms differentiated only by their shapes. Instead, he explains that chemists need only two principles: Sulphur is a sort of oil (flammable) with a microstructure that branches out with a clinging texture; Mercury is a sort of water (inflammable) with a slippery or gliding texture. These two forms of cohesion could easily be explained by his own undifferentiated theory of matter. The only remainder of the process is Salt, the “terra damnata” or “caput mortuum” of the alchemists. Stiernhielm comments that:

¹⁶ Ms. Fd. 4, KB, Stockholm: “Plato interdum sine luce: sed multa mente; Aristoteles sine Luce & Mente philosophantur.” Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket Stockholm. Stiernhielm’s source is Justus Lipsius, *Manducatio ad Philosophiam Stoicam*, see Johan Nordström, *Georg Stiernhielm*, p. 142.

What science applies to the principles of Chemistry? Look up Descartes' letter to Mersenne . . . where there are these words: "je ne concoy point ces parties indivisibles, ni autrement differentes entre'elle, que par la diversit, de leur Figures." He even says that chemists understand sulphur as oil; mercury as water. It seems to me that there is nothing on earth except created shapes, species that are made by the composition of one Naa (natural) body.¹⁷

Naa is the shorthand term Stiernhielm uses in his philosophy to designate the corpuscular nature of created matter. He thought of Naa (Natura) as a primary substratum and that Naa would suffice to constitute all the elements, all the genera and species of living matter, and, thus, all there is. Stiernhielm's "created shapes" were probably the Pythagorean solids presented in Plato's *Timaeus* taken to represent the elements; the same ones as those (cube, icosahedron, sphere) that Stiernhielm had David Klöker Ehrenstrahl paint into his portrait in 1663. Like Descartes, Stiernhielm argued against the existence of a vacuum, against the neo-Epicurean atomist Pierre Gassendi.¹⁸ There is no evidence that Descartes ever saw Stiernhielm's *Specimen Demonstrationum* but his friend, the Ambassador of France, Pierre Chanut, later that year told Isaac Vossius that Stiernhielm's system was not thought through.¹⁹

To Stiernhielm, Nature is not, as with Aristotle, produced through form (specie) and matter but rather, as with the Stoics, it is produced by a cause (causa) and a unified, inert, and chaotic matter abbreviated as Maa. The cause is light (lux) and mind (mens). When light vivifies the female component Maa, then her daughter Naa, a corporeal informed substance, is generated. This Naa is always beautiful (multa pulchra) and is the unmixed substrate of all natural genera, the Aia (anima).²⁰

¹⁷ "De Principiis Chymici quid sit scientia? vide Cartes in epist 40 ad Mersenne Tom 2, p. 235. ubi his verbis: éje ne concoy point ces parties indivisibles, ni utrement differentes entre'elle, que par la diversit, de leur Figures' dicit ibidem Chymicos intellegere sub Sulphure, Oleum; sub mercurium Aquam. Mihi sunt nihil visi Terrae abusque creationes figmenta; species facta ad compositorum von (sic) unius Naa corporum." Stiernhielm Ms. Fd. 9. f. 31. Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

¹⁸ Pierre Gassendi was invited to Stockholm by Pierre Bourdelot and Isaac Vossius, both intrested in the atomism of Lucretius, see Åkerman, *Queen Christina*, pp. 73ff.

¹⁹ Pierre Chanut's comment in Isaac Vossius' Concept book 8, VI F28. Quoted by permission of Amsterdam UB. Copy in Nordström's Nachlass box 11. Uppsala UB.

²⁰ Ms. Fd. 5. Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

Stiernhielm found reference both to the corporeal Naa and to the genera "Aia Mundi" in the *Idiotam dialogo de mente* by Nicholas of Cusa.²¹ All three—Maa, Naa, and Aia—are conceived as female principles and to them are added the neutral Rao (ratio), a linguistic root representing order, number, and measurement. This gendered terminology is from the *Pimander* and in Ficino's edition the scheme is said to be Pythagorean.

Stiernhielm's focus upon matter, occurred early. In the new city of Gothenburg, on 8 February, 1635, Stiernhielm copied down three queries taken from Johan Alsted's physics: 1. Is Maa feigned as a unity by the imagination? 2. Is Maa an entity at all active? 3. What is the difference between the Aristotelian and the Mosaic Maa? No direct answers are given, but Stiernhielm copied down that Maa is a sensitive, but passive principle. Significantly, he added the Jesuit Piccolomini's enigmatic view that "Maa ornavi cupit ad forma tantumquam foemina a viro."²²

Contemporary research on the linguistic roots (radixes) of these concepts led to a conjecture that they are Greek versions of earlier Phoenician concepts; Maa may be the Phoenician "Moth", just as Chaos may be their "Chaut." This hypothesis was, at least, Stiernhielm's view in 1656 when he set to work on Edmund Dickinson's recent investigation *Delphi Phoenicizantes* (Oxford, 1655).²³

Because of the Hermetic assumption of an original insight into the acts of creation, the Pythagorean scheme of Maa, Naa, and Rao was thought to be a fit prelude to chemistry, as can be seen in Stiernhielm's metallurgic fragment on how Art imitates Nature:

Ars Naa Aemula. In artificialibus Maa, exempl:
graa ferrum est, lux ignis, Mens faber, ferrum passio.
Naa forte et Rao conventionis.²⁴

Graa (gravida, gravitas?) is here a new linguistic invention, used to designate the addition needed to purify the gray, inert, but loaded,

²¹ Nicholas Cusanus, *Idiotam Dialogo de Mente*, i.e., The Layman's Dialogue on the Mind.

²² Ms. Fd. 3, pp. 252–3. Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm. "An Maa una sit ens imaginarum. 2. An Maa sit ens acta. 3. Quodam sit differentia inter maam aristoteliam et Mosaicam."

²³ Edmund Dickinson, *Delphi Phoenicizantes* (Oxford, 1655), pp. 16 and 66–7.

²⁴ Stiernhielm Ms. Fd. 9, f. 28. Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

character of one species of matter, iron ore, at a time before it is processed. Stiernhielm even thought that the orderly and informing Rao (ratio) could be linguistically connected to the Greek "Rhea," mother of the gods, and to the Swedish "Råd, råda till," i.e., "giving counsel."²⁵

In the papers which he wrote from Wasula in 1656, Stiernhielm struggles to find the correct terminology for his scheme of parturition; he sees Naa as forced, pressed, or promulgated out of Maa, "Naa (mentis filiae) est qua in Maa impata (decreta)."²⁶ But, radix Maa is evil; or as Ficino unfortunately says, "All evil reaches us through the female. At the altar (in the Eucharist) flesh is engendered from the body of Maa. Thus Naa (corpori) is bred by Maa, and they have contrary qualities." Or in the Florentine's own words, "Omne malis a Foemina nobis accidit. Ara scilicet corpori mancipata a Maa corporis. A contrarietur qualitatem elementalium."²⁷

On this scant evidence, Stiernhielm affirms that there are three kinds of soul, "Triplex est Aia: Ex Mente, rationalis; ex Luce vitalis sive Aialis. Ex Maa mortalis rado-que brutalis." He repeatedly writes of Maa as a destructive gravity, a gravity brutal to the mind and alien to measure: "Maa corruptelem & ultimo destructionum mortium & non esse in fort. Brutalius est a Mente, idoque Rao, ordine, numero, mensura etc. alieno."²⁸

Stiernhielm's system is both saliently gendered and conspicuously sexed, although it is not at all as bluntly erotic as is his celebrated shorter enigmas and sonnets.²⁹ To understand the world of these Baroque thinkers, critics often concentrate on their self-assertive maleness, as in Stiernhielm's *Hercules* or the other verse. Yet, the Hermetic ground of his philosophic treasures is better clarified by interrogating the female attributes of his thought. Jungian concepts of the repressed mother/father imago may well explain the threatening release of the chaotic Maa and her low-key murmuring in the background of creation. In 1656, he had promised Björnclou to produce

²⁵ Ms. Fd. 9, f. 33.

²⁶ Ms. Fd. 9, f. 15.

²⁷ Ms. Fd. 9, f. 16.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ In 1668, his "Enigma for the Ladies," a sexual pun on the viola da gamba, was printed on an advertisement for the *Hercules*, see Per Wieselgren, *Swio-Estonica*, No. 19, pp. 3–33.

a "philosophia nova: mysteriis Zoroastris, numeri Pythagorae."³⁰ It was perhaps related to the Corpus Naalis quadrata:

Corpus Naalis
27. Vita 2 729 Homo
Harmone

In this figure, creative principles, musical harmonies, and numerical relations together form a world of solid fact, a world still replete with mystery and hidden correspondences, that first when grasped by an active intellect can reveal themselves as entirely proportionate. Measured polyphony of voice and music was as vital to Stiernhielm's system as the paper and ink on which he wrote because, to the Pythagoreans, a spoken word is closer to thought than one written and reveals more directly the presence of mind and the reality of soul. One dimension is thus critically lacking, the dimension of the vibrant voice.

Poetic consonance of rhythm and rhyme is, however, a direct consequence of rhetoric because pure speech is based on writing, not on original thought. While Latin and Dutch verse can be reshaped into a Swedish poem, such a transformation does not show any desire to create a fully new poetic universe. This was precisely Stiernhielm's point. To him, words normally appeared only as transformations of an original dispensation; to construe new ideas, and thereby abandon tradition, actually seemed foreign. Yet, in this process of imitation and recycled use, thought and speech succeed in making reference back to the original soul; actually, even back to the image of the mother as revealed in Stiernhielm's ideas on "Radix Maa."

Following Plato's doctrine in the *Cratylus*, Stiernhielm assumed that while the form of a word could not perfectly resemble the form of a thing (423a), it is still possible, through another, non-sensible, sort of, resemblance to take the right name as an image of the thing (439a). We learn through the medium of names; yet knowledge of things is not derived from mere names, but from the image (eikon)

³⁰ 27 May 1668, Fd. 9, f. 20, Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket Stockholm. Stiernhielm to Matthias Biörnclou 26 Februari 1656 in Per Wieselgren, *Stiernhielms bref*.

these words express. Nevertheless, things are formed from simple elements that words can express through their image-function. Perfect words hence ought to be formed through the corresponding primitive elements of sound. According to Plato, the Greek vowel “iota” denotes a thinness that can penetrate through everything; it occurs correctly in “ienai,” to speed, and “iesthai,” to dash. Equally, the tremulant “rho” is found correctly in the Greek “rein,” streaming, and “ierthai,” to tremble.³¹

Similarly investigating the polysemy of names and things, Stiernhielm maintains that each word derives from a stem which, read in other contexts, can explain the use of the derived group as a whole. Each root, “maa” for instance, emerges as having roles in multiple discourses (classified through various verbal accusatives) and occurs in sequences universally spun through the European languages and which Stiernhielm believed had run from Scandinavian to Phrygian Greek (here underlined). Thus, Radix Maa forms a conceptual cluster variously grouped:

verba potentia: Mars, man, maritus, marsk, makt, mao, mængd;
 verba motus: maka, *moleo*, machina, magus, malus;
 verba generationis: må, *mao*, moo, mamma, magd (mö), minne;
 verba lucis: m’örna (illuscere), *mair*, morn, morgon, måna.

A number of factors come into play in this form of grammar—biology, social relations of power, gender, and probably the unconscious—to form the qualities of different perceptual and emotional experiences superimposed on a pure semiotic flux. This “maotic” flux remains unrepressed into stable patterns, tapping its resonances into the passionate Epicurean dimension of humour, sex, song, poetry and laughter. Radix Maa is seen as an essence of raw matter unimposed on by form. As Sven Delblanc has noted, it points to a sort of prelinguistic flux of movements, gestures, sounds, and rhythms in which these semiotic maternal dreams can run unscathed from morality, religion and the patriarchal Law. Unable to cope with this female ecstasy, Stiernhielm repressed it into a sort of black death, the evil Maa. He even passed judgment on the darkness of the verba

³¹ Sven Delblanc has briefly noted that Radix Ma plays a unexplained unconscious role in Stiernhielm’s system. There is a separate manuscript *Radix Ma sive Specimen istius vocis Etymologicum* (begun in 1649). On the *Cratylus*, see Swartling, *Georg Stiernhielm*, pp. xii and 79–80, n. 4.

lucis Maa as a whole: "Et hoc iterum ex mysterio indolis literae M, quae *obscuram* quidem et *opacam* revera in se habet et aliis insinuat."³²

Section 6. Dua Opposita Contraria: Lux and Arachne

Stiernhielm's central problem, no doubt, was how to understand Lux and its emanation from the World Soul; consider another fragment from 1656, one printed by Nordström:

The Soul of the World seems to me to be composed of mind and light & insofar as it animates the world, through a Material Spirit, which mediates. . . . I define it thus: The Soul of the World is the Mind's Light governing the World vitally and reigning. Or, it is the Mind's Light ascending in Mundane bodies. Or, as an act of Light and Mind, etc. This is what the Stoics call fire; fecund seminal reasons.³³

Here, Stiernhielm substitutes entirely a plainer Stoic scheme for the earlier Hermetic terminology. Of particular interest is the expression: "Anima Mundi est Lux Mente gubernata Mundum vivificans & regens." (The Soul of the World is the Mind's Light governing the World vitally & reigning).

In the mind's government and reign, in its action seen as "gubernata" and "regens," light is produced. The production of light is taken in a special way. Lux is seen as an internal mental attribute but it is also actively at work in the world. If the mind, now termed Minerva, manages to govern and attain a reign, she completes a system as well as sustaining it. An inquiry into the operations of the mind therefore is both subjective psychology and objective ontology. Or, perhaps Stiernhielm's attempts can fruitfully be termed a sort of pre-modern descriptive phenomenology, in short a psychosophia.

In much of Baroque philosophy, a centrally located idea of "God's dominance and reign" had become a distinctly theosophic formula for expressing not only (a) the ordered character of nature, (b) the

³² Swartling, *Georg Stiernhielm*, pp. 78–9. Interview with Sven Delblanc on Swedish Radio, 1989.

³³ Nordström, *Georg Stiernhielm*, p. 142. "Anima Mundi mihi videtur Composita esse ex mente et Luce & quatenus Mundum animat. . . . Eam sic definio: Anima mundi est Lux Mente gubernata Mundum vivificans & regens. vel: est Lux Mente accensa in corpora Mundano. vel: actus Lucis, et Mentis: etc. Ea est quem ignem vocant Stoici, ratione Seminale foecundum."

perfection of the natural system, i.e., its completeness, (c) the applicability of scientific principles to nature (its movement according to laws), but also (d) a special analog to human/male creativity.³⁴

But if, as Stiernhielm further postulated in his main treatise, the Hebrew spirant “aleph” spins the world in the way the classical spider-woman Arachne was to spin it continuously by her polarity Minerva-Ratio, then aleph-logos is the sole key by which all things are tuned. According to a grim Greek myth, Arachne, the most skillful weaver of Lydia, challenged Minerva/Athena to a weaving contest. While Minerva wove into her web stories of those who had aroused the anger of the gods (mostly of acts wreaking punishment on younger women for challenging household authority), Arachne chose to weave the errors of the gods, errors, Ovid writes, such as the rape of Europe, and:

She wrought Asterie held by the struggling eagle, she wrought Leda beneath the wings of the Swan. She added how, in satyr’s image hidden, Jove filled lovely Antiope with twin offspring, how in a golden shower he tricked Danaë; Aegina as a flame; Mnemosyne as a shepherd; Deo’s daughter as a spotted snake. . . . Here is Phoebus as a country man . . . how as a shepard he tricked Macareus’ daughter, Isse; how Bacchus deceived Erigone with a false bunch of grapes; how Saturn in a horse’s shape begot the centaur, Chiron. The edge of the web with its narrow border is filled with flowers and clinging ivy intertwined.³⁵

Neither Minerva, nor Envy, Ovid says, could find any fault in these images of rape and seduction. But Minerva was enraged by the excellence of Arachne’s fabric and tore it to pieces. Struck by grief, Arachne hanged herself in a rope. Nonetheless, she was saved by Minerva, who transformed Arachne into an ever spinning spider. She was also told a horrid tale: “Live on, indeed wicked girl, but hang thou still; and let this doom of punishment (that thou mayst fear for future times as well) be declared upon thy race, even to remotest posterity.” Eternally spinning patterns for the sails of the ships of the Argonauts, Arachne’s story is chiseled on the frame of the Parthenon.

Images of this doubtful nature were also woven into the mantle spread around the statue of Athena/Minerva. Each year, at the sum-

³⁴ Ms. Fd 5. Quoted by permission of Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

³⁵ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI, 103–130.

mer solstice, 21 June, this cloth (peplum) was carried from the Parthenon (the virgin temple) through the city to the *agorà*—a pan-athenian procession in memory of the earthborn (motherless) genesis of its citizens—to manifest in Ovid's words, "what reward she may expect for her mad daring." Stiernhielm knew the violent background to the myth because the Queen's scholar at court, Nicolas Heinsius, published at the Elzevier press a new complete edition of the *Metamorphoses* in 1652.³⁶

The myth of Arachne (present also in Velasquez' baroque painting of 1659) represents some central elements of a world exclusively structured around the male principle: masculine aggression thinly disguised as seduction and fertility. In the scribbling of Stiernhielm, on the other hand, Arachne and Minerva are seen as a "syzigia," a pair, a conjunction: a duality, i.e., connected. These creative contraries have deep historical roots. In the cosmology developed at Hermiopolis in Egypt based on the double-helix path of Sirius, the "syzigies" were specifically the twin years of good and bad (seven plus seven years) by which the world constantly renews itself. The syzigies manifest the strife of contraries, they are antithetical phenomena, but join in a spiral force to uphold the cosmos. Thus there is polarity, space, and time; all formed by a spontaneous generation through God's vibrant word and henceforth also structured in linguistic terms.³⁷

This ancient Hermetic scheme of opposites was transmitted by Nicholas of Cusa, who postulated that every opposition displays a tendency to union, an identity of contraries that attract and repel, to make a clear unity out of a confused plurality. Similarly, Giordano Bruno held that every power must evolve an opposite in order to be clearly manifested; this opposition, however, ultimately brings reunion. The process of arriving at a unity through the opposition of contraries required novel notions such as "coincidence of opposites" and "unsummable complementaries."³⁸

³⁶ *Metamorphoses* VI, 84. For a feminist analysis of the myth of Arachne, see "Spinning: Cosmic tapestries," in Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology—the Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (New York: Beacon Press, 1978), pp. 396–7.

³⁷ Is the opposition Arachnae/Minerva meant to be taken as Mythos vs. Logos, as with Dionysius/Apollo, of a chaotic content opposed to logical form? Is it more sensual? Is it the pleasure vs. reality principle?

³⁸ My focus on the "syzigia" derives from a note by Nordström, box 6, Uppsala UB. Cf. Umberto Eco, *Le Poetichi di Joyce* (Milano, 1962). Eco sees the oppositions in *Finnegans Wake* as dependent on a reading of Cusanus and Bruno.

But, Stiernhielm speaks in a system of male/female/ mother/father/ daughter-relations regulated by the unconscious. The rhythm and sound patterns are only “ironically” liberated from the unconscious and his fictional idea of Arachne/Minerva floats in this system. Modern psycholinguists note that the sound of poetry can reflect primary emotional impulses and that the beaten pathways usually take shape as a conscious logic in symbolic form. Would it seem inevitable that, like a nefarious fate, Stiernhielm’s desire (or lack of desire) for the mother was going to be punished by the Oedipal Minerva?

Only after having repressed that conflict, can Stiernhielm assume the position of the father and, as one can easily see, his polarity is not structured as a benign female/male division, but as a polarity between two differing, and ideal, female heroines doomed to eternal strife. The spider’s web, on the other hand, converges as a spiral net towards a central point—a *centrum securitatis*—the spider sitting in this web. To conclude, the masculine Aleph (the divine word) is indeed the center of Stiernhielm’s universe, not Arachne.

SILVIA BERTI

Conferring with Dick Popkin

Like so many of us, I became acquainted with Richard Popkin through his scholarly work before getting to know him personally. As an undergraduate, I read his *History of Scepticism* and a few of his essays.

I met Dick for the first time in 1985, while I was a Fellow at the Clark Library, though our paths had crossed before, without our knowing it, in the mysterious domain of intellectual and emotional proximities. It was thanks to an old Jewish antiquarian bookseller—a mutual friend, as we were to discover later on. Salomon Meyer's bookshop in Amsterdam was an enchanted island: browsing among his books meant sudden and exciting encounters with first editions of Spinoza, Basnage, Toland, La Peyrère and every kind of rare *Judaica*. One day, shortly before his death and most unexpectedly, Meyer suggested I should take over his shop. Though extremely touched, I had to turn down his offer; he urged me to change my mind, saying that the only two people to whom he could have offered his "creation"—the remarkable achievement of a former assistant shop boy in a kosher butcher's in Hamburg—were Richard Popkin and myself. He thus drew the first ideal link between us. But he also unwittingly provided yet another major tie between us, sometimes, I think, with a magical Kabbalistic foreknowledge. It was he who revealed to me the importance, for the study of Spinozism, of Abraham Wolf's private library, now part of the Special Collections of the University Research Library in Los Angeles and it was from those rooms, a few minutes after having discovered the first edition of the *Traité de trois imposteurs*, that I decided to call Richard Popkin and ask him if he would give it a look. The expression on his face when he picked up the small book beautifully bound in green maroquin made me realize more fully to what degree the joy of scholarly discovery, the experience of the sheer tactile value of a rare item, and the awareness of the cultural meaning of the text may live harmoniously in a true scholar.

Since then I have met Dick several times, in various parts of the world, in Los Angeles and in Leiden, in Rome and in Zurich, during seminars and for personal friendly conversations and I have come to feel very deeply indebted to him, for the unassuming generosity with which he shares his knowledge, his tireless attention as a listener, his capacity in helping you to reach the final stage of an intellectual process, without his suggesting anything explicit. His conversation has been an increasing source of inspiration for me, as well as confirming me more than once in my attempts to trace the unexpected ways in which different intellectual and religious attitudes were connected in Europe between the 1680s and the 1730s.

If it is true that there are two main categories of scholars—those who privilege synthesis and whose emphasis is on interpretation rather than on analysis and those who regard the importance of new discoveries as the core of true scholarship and privilege analytical insight—Dick obviously belongs to the latter. Anyone who is acquainted with him, however superficially, knows how excited he can get when he is given the chance of connecting newly discovered pamphlets and unknown manuscripts with previous “finds.” If I can trust my impressions, I would say that “everything connects” personally for Dick Popkin if the “new discovery” takes place in the course of a research trip across Europe, and can be immediately shared and discussed within the friendly setting of a seminar. I was both witness and part of such an experience at the one-month-long Leiden Seminar on the Three Impostors (now published by Kluwer as *Heterodoxy, Spinozism and Free Thought in Early-Eighteenth-Century Europe*) organized by Dick in 1990. He turned the academic idea of a seminar into an enhancing intellectual and human experience, where friendship and work went hand in hand. Lively discussions on the state of one’s research began over bread and jam at breakfast time—the participants were all staying at the same hotel—and, punctuated by library hours and seminar sessions, went on long after dinner time.

Dick’s attitude in this context was quintessentially anti-academic, anti-rhetorical and giving; an attitude which it would comfort me to think that I have integrated together with his intellectual teaching.

One image amongst many appears to my mind when I think of those days: the affectionate, expectant and gently ironic look on Dick’s face as, grasping his braces and bending slightly forward, he would say to me “What have you found today?”

UNMASKING THE TRUTH: THE THEME
OF IMPOSTURE IN EARLY MODERN
EUROPEAN CULTURE, 1660–1730*

Silvia Berti

When, on April 12, 1728, a French country curate was imprisoned in the Bastille, charged with atheism and anti-religious writing, the intellectual events I shall describe here were already in full flow; in fact they were about to reach the conclusion of their “creative” phase. The good curate’s name was Guillaume, and he lived in what is now the Département de la Seine, not far from Paris, “Curé de Fresne sur Berny, frere d’un laboureur du pays.”¹ The little we know of him comes mainly from a dossier concerning his case, which includes also his arrest warrant.² Guillaume’s misadventures were due precisely to his attack on religious imposture. He wrote one of the many little tracts the eighteenth century was so fond of, in which he accuses Moses, Mohammed, and Jesus, no less, of being religious and political impostors.³ As we know from the marquis de Mirabeau’s unpublished *Vie de Plélo*, “Un pauvre curé . . . se divertit a remplir le titre de ce livre imaginaire dont on a tant parlé *des (sic!) tribus impostoribus*. Son ouvrage étoit divisé en trois parties; la premiere détronait Moyse, la seconde perdoit le respect du a la sacree personne de notre seigneur Jesus Christ et la troisieme maltraitoit Mahomet. Moyse et Mahomet n’étoient cependant la qu’en faveur du titre, mais quand (sic- *quant*) a la seconde personne de la trinité,

* A first version of this paper was presented at a gathering of early modern historians at Princeton and at the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1996. I would like to thank all those whose comments generously provided me with food for thought.

¹ Dossier on the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, Archives Nationales, Paris, L 10, no. 6, f. 92.

² Archives de la Bastille, Arsenal, Paris Ms. 11012, ff. 239–366; see also Felix Revaissou, *Archives de la Bastille*, 19 vols. (Paris, 1866–1904), 14:197–201.

³ An extract on this text and Guillaume (from ms. Nantes 204, p. 157) was published in Ira O. Wade, *The Clandestine Organization and Diffusion of Philosophic Ideas in France from 1700 to 1750* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), pp. 135–36. See also Archives Nationales, Paris, L10, no. 6, ff. 90–92. On Guillaume’s text see Miguel Benítez, “Autour du *Traité des trois imposteurs*: l’affaire Guillaume”, *Studi francesi* 91 (1987, pp. 21–36).

il l'avoit prise dans la plus sincere aversion. Il se donnoit une peine horrible pour prouver que deux et deux font quatre, et que trois ne sauroient faire un. Mr. Guillaume, muni de ce bel ouvrage, et de l'espece de merite qu'il falloit pour l'avoir composé, s'etoit repandu dans Paris . . . il avoit communiqué son livre a plusieurs personnes, et cachoit encore plus mal ses sentiments dans la conversation."⁴ As a twentieth-century philosopher of Italian Idealism would say, practical action followed speculative acquisition. By which I mean that Guillaume, having had the strength to denounce religious imposture, then cast caution to the winds and openly challenged the watchful eye of Chancellor Maurepas. Inevitably, the Cardinal of Noailles was soon informed of the "espèces de conciles" of free spirits which met "a jour marqué" in Count Plélo's *salon*, "ou Mr. Guillaume étoit le president."⁵ Not only was the erudite theme of the triple imposture such common currency as to be clutched in the hands of a country curate, but it was then passed on by those same hands to the "frondeurs," enlightened circles of Paris, such as the "Club de l'Entresol."⁶

In meetings of this kind aristocrats "de bonne souche" and provincials of no title and scant inheritance met on an equal footing. The Marquis d'Argenson, Count Plélo, and other friends of Montesquieu's like the Abbé de Saint-Pierre and the Abbé Alary would come together to comment on the "gazettes," discuss international politics, the English constitution, church politics, and ways of reforming France. Here all the corrosive, anti-papal, anti-religious spirit of the Regency was concentrated, easily accommodating the blasphemous attack on the three impostors. But let me leave these gentlemen to their weekly discussions in an apartment on the Place Vendôme, and try to understand why the theme of imposture gradually assumed specific shape and relief in European culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

If I were inclined to follow Arthur Lovejoy's method, which I am not, I would try to trace the genesis of this cultural crystallisation within classical or biblical culture and follow it through into other

⁴ Archives Nationales, M 356, dossier IV7, pp. 56–61 (ff. 56–57). See also the other copy, with some interesting differences, M 356 dossier IV2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ An interesting account of the meetings of the Entresol is to be found in *Journal et mémoires du marquis d'Argenson*, 9 vols. (Paris, 1859–67), 1:91–111.

periods and places. What interests me instead is the surprising emphasis and wide-spread influence of the imposture theme as a marker of the extraordinary "remuement" of consciousness and mental attitudes, the finally-achieved critical freedom, intellectual, religious, and political, which was beginning to emerge roughly between 1680 and 1720, although there were signs of it in the 1660s. I refer, of course, to the complex phenomenon which Paul Hazard defines "la crise de la conscience européenne."

The notion of imposture in its strictly etymological sense, as fraud or deceit, was, in the sixteenth century, generally connected with the notion of a false identity, as in the famous case of Martin Guerre and, as Natalie Zemon Davis has recently remarked, it frequently alluded to some form of prodigy or to the extraordinary in human affairs.⁷ Only in a few cases was it connected with the fraudulent use of magic. All this ran parallel to, and some decades later converged with, the vigorous resurrection of the theme of religious imposture, which was Averroistic in origin, and which resurfaced within the learned, libertine culture of the seventeenth century, after a sleep of some few hundred years. This dual aspect of imposture, however, is intelligible through the cultural context of dissimulation and its other face, simulation.

Recent historiographers agree in fixing on the period between 1550 and 1650 as the century of dissimulation. The practice increased, for self-evident reasons, in the Counter-reformation countries, and underscored all the moral, aesthetic, and of course political attitudes of the Baroque world. Just as shadow, in the painting of the period, was the means to achieve an effect of light and a fuller dimension of the real, in the same way dissimulation was the protective framework for structuring an uncertain inner truth coming to grips with the crushing weight of external oppression. Prudence as an art of government, whether "mixte" or "extraordinaire," was theorised by intellectuals such as Justus Lipsius and Naudé, and even the freest man in Europe, whose work was determinant in effecting a change in the collective mind-set, had chosen as his motto, the Latin *caute*. I mean, of course, Baruch Spinoza. In this sense it is hard not to

⁷ See Natalie Zemon Davis, "From Prodigious to Heinous: Simon Goulart and the Reframing of Imposture," in A. Burguière, J. Goy, and M. J. Tits-Dieuaide, eds., *L'histoire grande ouverte. Hommages à Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), pp. 274-83.

concur with Perez Zagorin, when he points out that Delio Cantimori and Carlo Ginzburg,⁸ in their study of dissimulation, limit their analysis too exclusively to the circles of Nicodemists, i.e., those groups of Italian evangelicals and heretics who legitimated the simulation of obedience to the Catholic Church to safeguard their inner faith. Surely it should be extended to the vast and momentous phenomenon of crypto-Judaism and the question of political deceit in the commentators of 17th-century Spain examined by Fernández-Santamaria could be viewed side by side with Rosario Villari's analysis of dissimulation as political opposition and active resistance to power.⁹ Cantimori was longer-sighted, however, in perceiving how the position of the heretics, whether simulated or expressed, was to have more serious and more active effects even within the Enlightenment. However widespread dissimulation was as a mental habit in 17th-century Europe, without distinction of faith, from Bacon to Gracián, it remained a pale and unhappy daughter of the Counter-reformation, sister to probabilism and the mental reserve of the Jesuits. There is certainly a considerable difference between poor Paolo Sarpi, in his comments on masks: I am compelled to wear a mask, since without one nobody can survive in Italy,¹⁰ and the contented Jesuit, Bouhours, who teased out all the virtues of devices which allowed us to see things "sous un masque qui nous surprend."¹¹ Whatever our own opinion on this question might be, dissimulation wrote its triumphal note in Torquato Accetto's tract *Della dissimulazione onesta*

⁸ Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying. Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 12–3. Zagorin refers especially to Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1939)—a new edition of his book, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. A. Prosperi (Torino: Einaudi, 1992), enriched by other important writings of Cantimori's on the history of heresy, with an enlightening introduction by Adriano Prosperi, is worth looking at—and Carlo Ginzburg, *Il nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione nell'Europa del '500* (Torino: Einaudi, 1970).

⁹ See J. A. Fernández-Santamaria, *Reason of State and Statecraft in Spanish Political Thought, 1595–1640* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983) and Rosario Villari, *Elogio della dissimulazione. La lotta politica nel Seicento* (Bari: Laterza, 1987).

¹⁰ The original reads: "Personam coactus fero, licet in Italia nemo sine ea esse possit". Letter to Jacques Gillot dated May 12, 1609, in B. Ulianich, ed., P. Sarpi, *Lettere ai gallicani* (Wiesbaden: 1961), p. 133. On Sarpi and his comments on masks see Peter Burke, "The Great Unmasker: Paolo Sarpi, 1552–1623," *History Today* XV (1965), pp. 426–32.

¹¹ Le Père Dominique Bouhours, *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (Paris, 1671), VI, p. 70. On the role of emblems see the classic study by Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e letteratura, 1964).

(1641),¹² where all conflict with morality seems over. And, after all, as demonstrated by the Arnaud du Tilh-Martin Guerre case, for many people, if not for Councillor Coras of Toulouse, perfect deceit was almost a form of truth;¹³ and did not Molière warn, with inimitable down-to-earth concern: “N’y a-t-il point quelque danger a contrefaire le mort?” (*Le Malade imaginaire*, Act III, Scene XVII). What, then, is the way out of this apparently tightly-sealed universe? Help in conceptualising the problem might be forthcoming from a clear-cut systematiser such as Vauvenargues who despite—or perhaps because of—his lack of originality, shows us how an 18th-century viewpoint can put this matter into focus. These are his comments in his *Introduction a la connaissance de l’esprit humain* (1746): “L’imposture est le masque de la verité: la dissimulation, une imposture réfléchie; la fourberie une imposture qui veut nuire.”¹⁴ (“Imposture is the mask of truth: dissimulation, reflected imposture; guile, imposture which seeks to harm”). Within twenty brief years, the categorising of the same phenomenon has been stood on its head. Dissimulating no longer means hiding to protect an inner vulnerability: it means deliberate trickery, with intent to harm. Once a title of merit, it is now an intolerable accusation. It comes as no surprise to meet the category of dissimulators in Pascal’s indignant pages against the perpetrators of “pensées de derrière,” vehicles of crime against religion and morality. His fifteenth *Lettre provinciale*, November, 1656, begins as follows: “mes révérends Pères, vos impostures croissent tous les jours. . . .” And again, in the handwritten notes which were only published in the last century by Faugère: “Je dis que vous êtes des imposteurs. Je vous le prouve; et que vous ne le cachez pas, et que vous l’autorisez insolemment. Brisacier, Minier, d’Alby.”¹⁵

The Baroque game of concealing to reveal is about to be up, and the mask is not only imposture hiding the truth: the two terms are irreconcilable. Alceste, in Molière’s *Misanthrope*, (Act I) rails against “fourberie” and the social climbing of the courtiers—“Au travers de

¹² See the very recent edition, Torquato Accetto, *Della dissimulazione onesta*, a cura di Salvatore Nigro (Torino: Einaudi, 1997).

¹³ On this famous case, see, as is obvious, Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

¹⁴ Marquis de Vauvenargues, *Introduction à la connoissance de l’esprit humain* (Paris, 1747), I.III, p. 655.

¹⁵ See *Pensées, fragments et lettres de Blaise Pascal, publiés pour la première fois conformément aux manuscrits originaux*, 2 vols., ed. A.-P. Faugère (Paris, 1864), 1:220.

son masque on voit à plein le traître . . .”—and it may be useful to recall that his celebrated *Tartuffe* was performed with resounding success, on 5 August 1667, under the title *L'Imposteur*. The following day performances were suspended by order of parliament, and the author branded an “athée à brûler.”¹⁶ But an even better example of the change in received behaviour is given by the engraving facing the title-page of the well-known *Les imposteurs insignes* (1683), by Jean-Baptiste de Rocoles.¹⁷ A beautiful young girl, representing truth, has the mask of imposture snatched from her face. Important as it is, this is rather a late flowering, which, in concentrating on the sort of impostor who usurped the royal prerogative, popularised a theme which was now part of the collective consciousness.

Two markedly Protestant texts were responsible for introducing the theme at the beginning of the century: Samuel Harsnet's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), a fierce attack on the English Jesuit William Weston's exorcising practices, and the *Histoires admirables et memorables de nostre temps*, published in Paris in 1600–1601 by Simon Goulart, a pastor and historian from Geneva. In the section entitled “Impostures et imposteurs estranges,” he denies any need for miracles as explanation and insists that fraud is quite sufficient.¹⁸

These few lines from an anonymous English satire of 1679 are strong evidence of how the theme of imposture was connected with the Protestant attack on both Papist theology and the politics of Rome:

This Wine and Wafer now are common food,
but a few words shall make 'em Flesh and Blood.
Such plain Impostures, such bold Cheats as these

¹⁶ On the intrigues concerning the staging of Molière's play, under the title *L'Imposteur*, and the attacks which he received, see the *Avertissement de l'éditeur sur le Tartuffe*, in *Oeuvres de Molière, avec des remarques grammaticales, des avertissemens et des observations sur chaque pièce*, par M. Bret, 6 vols. (Paris: 1804), 4: pp. 246–47. The plot against him—once again an imposture—came to such a point that “seditious” pamphlets were written on purpose and falsely attributed to him.

¹⁷ Jean Baptiste de Rocoles, *Les Imposteurs insignes, ou Histoires de plusieurs hommes de néant, de toutes Nations qui ont usurpé la qualité des Empereurs, Roys et Princes* (Amsterdam, 1683).

¹⁸ As in the case of Pierre le Brabançon, a ventriloquist, who, in 1560, in order to marry a girl whose father had died, “fit sortir une voix de son corps,” and claimed that it was the voice of her father, expressing his approval of the wedding (pp. 263–4). The most celebrated case Goulart deals with is the case of Martin Guerre (in the edition Genève, Paul Marceau, 1610, pp. 263–82). On Simon Goulart, see Leonard Chester Jones, *Simon Goulart, Sa vie et son oeuvre. 1543–1628*. (Geneva: A. Kundig, 1916).

Can surely none, but fools, or mad men please . . .
 No Heathen Law-giver, no Pagan Priest;
 Did e're with such mysterious Wiles infest
 The Superstitious Multitude, for that
 Is still most apt to fear they know not what.
 No Cabalist of State could e're Trapan
 With such firm subtlety as *Rome's Divan* . . .
Rome's doctrine is a secular device,
 Mere trick of state in reverend disguise.¹⁹

Within a few years, naturalistic criticism of miracles was to become dominant in libertine culture, and the theme of the deceit of legislators frequently linked with the theme of magic. The connection was underlined by, for example, Naudé as the basis upon which Moses and Jesus operated in his *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnés de magie* (1625), while a text such as the deist Charles Blount's *Life of Apollonius*²⁰ drew on classical examples, appropriating Protestant criticism of the paganism of Catholic superstition and implicitly comparing Jesus to Apollonius of Tyana. One Sr. de Clairval, who wrote of Apollonius as an impostor, similarly recalls Scaliger's negative judgment on Philostratus' account of the prodigies of Apollonius, "qui fut un franc imposteur."²¹ After mentioning that his contemporaries judged him "pour fourbe & pour magicien," he then subtly goes on to suggest that they believed "que le fils de Dieu en étoit un autre,"²² and on returning to Apollonius, he concludes: "Sa memoire s'évanouit bien-tost avec les tenebres de l'Idolatrie."²³

Treating Christ as an impostor was no simple matter, as may be imagined. There had already been cases in the sixteenth century, almost unimaginably heroic undertakings. That of Herman van Rijnswijck, for example, who was burnt alive, in Holland when it was still a Catholic country, in 1512, for maintaining that Christ was a confused spirit, a seducer of other confused spirits, that he was not the son of God, and that he had condemned everyone and saved

¹⁹ See *The Grand Imposture or The Mystery of Iniquity. A Satyr* (London, 1679), pp. 2–3.

²⁰ *The Two First Books of Philostratus, concerning the Life of Apollonius Tyaneus* (London, 1680).

²¹ *Histoire d'Apollone de Tyane, convaincue de fausseté et d'impostures* (Paris, 1705), p. xvii.

²² *Ibid.*, p. xx.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 174–5.

no-one;²⁴ or that of Jacques Gruet of Geneva, put to death in 1547 at the order of Calvin, who considered Jesus “un belitre, un menteur, un folz, un séducteur, détestable traitre et mechant pendu.”²⁵ Both, however, belong to the sphere of blasphemy, which is still part of the world of faith. Any theory of religious imposture is still a long way off.

The idea of Mohammed's imposture, however—the false prophet imposing on ignorant plebs with arms and guile—sounds less incongruous, and even less impious, in the context of European culture in the seventeenth century. Even Spinoza, who would most certainly have drawn the line at Moses and Jesus, considered Mohammed an impostor (cf. Ep. XLIII to Ostens); as did Hobbes (cf. *Leviathan* I, 12, or *Theophrastus Redivivus*, II, p. 515). Anglican treatises in England were shot through with persistently anti-Islamic traces. One of the most interesting examples is that of the Deacon of Lichfield, Lancelot Addison (1632–1703). In *The Life and Death of Mahumed* (1679), Addison criticised Mohammed's power and conquests as being the result of brute force and guile. With all the strength of a putatively divine revelation, he invented a religion able to satisfy the desires of his people, although ultimately succeeding only in being a “monstrous Impostor.”²⁶ Addison's denouncement traced to the “sensual Liberty allow'd by Mahumed” the main cause of the “advancement of his Imposture,” further backed by the promise that the “prodigious filthiness and carnality”²⁷ allowed on earth would be extended to paradise. And what can one say of the good Humphrey Prideaux, the great orientalist, who absolves Christ and Christianity by placing all the blame for imposture squarely and solely on Mohammed?

²⁴ On Herman van Rijswijck, see K. O. Meinsma, *Spinoza et son cercle* (Paris: Vrin, 1983), pp. 22–3. The evidence concerning his case is slight. The court sentence is to be found in Paul Fredericq, *Corpus Documentorum Inquisitionis Haereticæ Pravitatis Neerlandicae*, 10 vols. (Gent's-Gravenhage, 1889–1902), I, pp. 501–503.

²⁵ These words are taken from a twenty-six page long manuscript belonging to Gruet. It was found three years after his author's execution and burnt in front of his house in 1550. See Calvin's letters concerning him in *Lettres Françaises*, ed. Jules Bonnet (Paris, 1854), 1:211–12; 311–14. On the “affaire Gruet,” see François Berriot, *Athéismes et athéistes au XVI^e siècle en France*, 2 vols. (Lille: Cerf, 1976), 1:448–452; 2:849–867.

²⁶ Lancelot Addison, *The Life and Death of Mahumed, The Author of the Turkish Religion* (London, 1679), p. 132. Per lo stesso editore e nello stesso anno ne fu stampata un'altra edizione dal titolo *The First State of Mahumedism: Or, An Account of the Author and Doctrines of that Imposture*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Prideaux is nothing if not frank, as his full title declares: *The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet. With a Discourse annexed, for the Vindicating of Christianity from this Charge: Offered to the Consideration of the Deists of the Present Age*. In defending Christianity he is also careful to remember papal usurpation, and cannot refrain from observing that Mohammed's imposture began more or less at the same period in which "the Bishop of Rome . . . first assumed the title of Universal Pastor. . . . And from this time Both have conspired to found themselves an Empire in Imposture."²⁸

The treatment of Moses too generally ignores historical reconstruction, and certainly that of Strabo, who underlined the purity of Moses' monotheism and its lack of idolatrous traits (Strabo, 16:35). The polemics target two main objectives: Moses' magic arts used as an instrument of deceit, and his unscrupulous thirst for power, ratified by a putative divine investiture (it should be briefly recalled at this point that it is in Hellenistic culture that Moses begins to be defined as both legislator and impostor). These definitions are then taken up syncretistically by the Averroes-Pomponazzi school of naturalism, and later reappear in thinkers such as Bruno—who treated Moses, Jesus, and the Apostles as mere magicians, experts in trickery—and Campanella, Vanini, and Naudé who denounce miracles and supernatural prodigies merely as necessary components in the process of winning affirmation for every religion—and thus regard them as marketing strategies.

But, as I said earlier, the real objective was obviously Christianity, even though ambiguity was still very much the order of the day. This is already clear in the very early case of Cardano (and later in Charron and Naudé). In Book III of *De Sapientia*, he uses references to Machiavelli to denounce both the camp of the "armed prophets"—Mohammed, Moses, Constantine, and Alexander the Great—who falsely claimed divine origin and the camp of the "unarmed" prophets, who were obliged to use lies, simulation, and subtle political caution in place of arms. At the same time, however, he reiterates the need for this superstition, all the more so for a religious creed, to establish a solid political power base.²⁹

In all this literature, from Bodin's *Colloquium heptaplomeres* to La Mothe Le Vayer, sceptical of Christianity's moral superiority over

²⁸ Humphrey Prideaux, *The True Nature of Imposture* (London, 1697), p. 16.

²⁹ See *De Sapientia* (III) in *Opera Omnia Hieronimi Cardani* (Lugduni, 1663), pp. 534–562.

that of the ancients, or to Vanini, the most widely represented ancient source is Celsus, that pagan, bitingly anti-christian, voice underscored by a cultivated disdain for the superstition, ignorance, and credulity of the Christian populace. He considers Christ on a par with a magician or wizard (or impostor). The most audacious position, however, as regards Christ is certainly Vanini's, in the *De Deo* dialogue in the *De arcanis* (1616). Because if Cardano's Christ uses a wholly human knowledge, and a caution which is not divorced from deceit, Vanini's Christ is a full-blown impostor, the clever creator of the story of the Anti-Christ, to consolidate the future predominance of his own *lex*. In this ploy, lay Christ's most subtle astuteness: a pre-emptive strike against all future impostors who might want to pass themselves off as the true Messiah, and thus destroy the Christian religion: "Absente Antechristo, Christi Lex perennabit."³⁰

The increasing dominance of the theme of religious imposture in mid-17th-century Europe was an instigation to cultured, libertine society to search out the mythical treatise *De tribus impostoribus*, which legend attributed to Averroes and Frederick II Hohenstaufen. New currency was thus given to the Averroist dictum which somewhat sacrilegiously compared the three *leges*: "Lex Moysi, lex puerorum; lex Christi, lex impossibilium; lex Mahumeti, lex porcorum."³¹ An indication of how extensive this interest was by the mid-seventeenth-century is given in a letter from Thomas Denne to Henry Oxinden:

I have sent your bookes, (the particular whereof you may see on the other side in the postscript) by the foote post, which departs from hence this present day being thursday. I have again enquired for Barnardinas Ochinos de Tribus Mundi Impostoribus but cannot speake with any mann that ever saw any booke written by him on that subject, some men conceive that if Sir Kenelme Digby Quotes him it must be out of a manuscript.³²

³⁰ See Giulio Cesare Vanini, *De admirandis Naturae reginae deaeque mortalium arcanis*, in *Le opere di Giulio Cesare Vanini e le loro fonti*, 2 vols., ed. L. Corvaglia (Milano-Genova-Roma-Napoli, 1934), Dialogus L, *De Deo*, p. 270.

³¹ The quotation is taken from Prosper Marchand, *Impostoribus (Liber de Tribus)*, in *Dictionnaire Historique* (La Haye, 1758), p. 314. On the medieval origin of the *dictum* of the three impostors, its survival and transformation up to the seventeenth century, see also E. Renan, *Averroès et l'averroïsme* (Paris, 1866), pp. 297–8; A. Jundt, *Histoire du panthéisme populaire au Moyen Age et au XVI^e siècle*, (Strasbourg, 1875); L. Massignon, "La légende *De Tribus Impostoribus* et ses origines islamiques", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* LXXXII (1920), pp. 74–8; and M. Esposito, "Una manifestazione d'incredulità religiosa nel medioevo", *Archivio Storico Italiano* XVI (1931), pp. 3–48.

³² Thomas Denne to Henry Oxinden, 10 April 1645, in *The Oxinden and Peyton*

Writing to Boreel in 1656—this was also the year in which *Theophrastus Redivivus* was finished—Henry Oldenberg expresses alarm at the rash of incredulity which had broken out (or, as he puts it, *acuuntur cavilla profanorum*).³³ Considering the greatest danger to come from the idea of the triple imposture of Moses, Mohammed, and Christ, he looked to a confutation from Boreel to save Christianity. In the next two decades more texts were to appear: *Observations on the report of a Blasphemous Treatise by some affirmed to have bene of late yeares published in Print of 3 grand Impostors* by the English collector and bibliophile Richard Smith,³⁴ the faintly deistic *De tribus impostoribus* (published by Paul Straube in Vienna only in 1753), and *De imposturis religionum*, which Leibniz mentions in a letter to the librarian of Eugene of Savoy.³⁵

A counter-offensive was only a matter of time. The accusation of imposture was now leveled at anyone who had dared to challenge and demolish the Christian religion. Spinoza inevitably shone as “impostor ommium maximus,” along with Hobbes and Herbert of Cherbury, “viri callidi, & technarum pleni,”³⁶ in a piece by Kortholt, Professor of Theology at Kiel. The Dane, Kettner, compared Spinoza to B. Bekker in the *De duobus impostoribus*.³⁷ This reaction also contained

Letters 1642–1670, ed. with Notes and Introduction by D. Gardiner (London, 1937), p. 76. In his letter Denne is obviously referring to Digby's *Observations upon "Religio Medici,"* “Occasionally Written By Sir Kenelme Digby” (London, 1644), p. 33: “. . . and at the last (Ochino) wrote a furious Invective against those whom hee called the three *Grand-Impostors of the World*, among whom hee ranked our *Saviour Christ*, as well as *Moses* and *Mahomet*.”

³³ See *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, edited and translated by A. Rupert Hall and M. Boas Hall (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), Vol. 1 (1641–1662), pp. 89–92. On Boreel see L. Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), pp. 197–9. See also the recent essay by Rob Iliffe, “*Jesus Nazarenus legislator*: Adam Boreel's Defence of Christianity,” in S. Berti, F. Charles-Daubert, and R. H. Popkin, eds., *Heterodoxy, Spinozism and Free Thought in Early-Eighteenth-Century Europe. Studies on the Traité des trois imposteurs* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1996), pp. 375–96.

³⁴ As far as I know, there are three manuscripts of these *Observations*: one is at the Folger Shakespeare Library at Washington D.C., Folger Ms. Add. 868 = V.a 510, 4ff. The other two are at the British Library: one is to be found in Smith's manuscript *The Wonders of the World collected out of divers approved Authors*, Sloane 388, ff. 358–361; the title of the other manuscript (Sloane Ms. 1024, 12ff.) is *Observations upon ye report of the horrid Blasphemy of ye 3 Grand Impostors by some affirmed to have been of late yeares Uttered and published in print*, and it contains several variants. In this text, which was circulated before 1671, Richard Smith (1590–1675) informed his readers of the existence of a certain treatise on the three impostors.

³⁵ Leibniz to Hohendorf, 30 April 1716, Cod. 10450, f. 15, at the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

³⁶ B. Ch. Kortholti, *De tribus impostoribus magnis liber* (Hamburgi, 1701), p. 4 (first edition Kiloni, 1680).

³⁷ See F. E. Kettneri, *De duobus impostoribus, Spinoza et Balth. Beckero* (Linsiae, 1694).

a strong political component, of course, which is apparent from the subtitle of the book by Rocolles mentioned earlier: *Histoire de plusieurs hommes de Néant qui ont usurpé la qualité des Empereurs Rois et Princes*. It was mandatory to discredit those who, like the false Dimitri in Russia, had tried to replace the legitimate tsar; this particularly applied to Sabbatai Sevi, both the new Messiah and the king of the Jews, who had so profoundly shaken the European consciousness of the period, and not merely in Jewish circles.³⁸ Interestingly enough, a few years later, a print contained in a fascinating account of the vicissitudes of Sabbatai Sevi hints at the same theme, representing the Jew from Smyrna as “Der Falsche Messias Sabatai Sevi König der Juden Im 1666 Jahr” side by side with James Nayler, “Der Falsche Messias Iacob Naylor König der Quacker im 1657 Jahr.”³⁹

In this sense, it was less a case of atheism defeating the different forms of Christianity than of a painstaking and imaginative attempt by a part of society to free itself from the institutions of its past. The imposture theme was certainly a theoretically unsound and badly-articulated support, but it allowed those concerned to delegitimise monarchical claims to divine right.

Meanwhile, the various libertine analyses of imposture were beginning to burn themselves out, exhausted by internal contradictions and a series of defeats. A genuine turning point came with the *Traité ds trois imposteurs* or *Esprit de Spinoza*, written in French at the beginning of the eighteenth century. I have written on this text at great length elsewhere,⁴⁰ and shall only briefly recall here to what extent its anthropological notion of the origin of religions, based upon

³⁸ Concerning the reconstruction of the debate and the reactions regarding the figure of Sabbatai Sevi, see, as is obvious, Scholem's masterpiece, *Sabbatai Sevi. The Mystical Messiah 1626–1673* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

³⁹ This engraving is to be found in *Die Geschichte von dem Grossen Betrieger/oder Falschen Juden Könige Sabatai Sevi von Smirna* (n.p., 1702). I am currently writing an essay on this text, which will be published soon. On the ways in which Sabbatai Sevi's case was described, see Richard Popkin, “Three English Tellings of the Sabbatai Zevi Story,” in *Jewish History* 8, Nos. 1–2 (1994), pp. 43–54.

⁴⁰ See in particular my French-Italian critical edition of the *Trattato dei tre impostori. La vita e lo spirito del signor Benedetto de Spinoza* (Torino: Einaudi, 1994), where the most relevant bibliographical information is to be found, and also the essay “The First Edition of the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, and its Debt to Spinoza's Ethics” in M. Hunter and D. Wootton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 183–220. For a more comprehensive assessment of the influence and diffusion of the text, see the essays contained in *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought*.

Spinoza's doctrine of the imagination, and upon his biblical criticism, empowered a new and more radical use of the libertine tradition, virtually releasing it from its destiny of ambivalence. Not only does the text openly admit in some instances incredulity regarding the great historical religions: it attempts to negate the very foundations of the idea of religion and creation. It does so, with considerable ingenuity, through a forced, materialistic reading of Spinoza's concept of substance.⁴¹ The results are less than convincing, but the die is clearly cast. Religious imposture is simultaneously philosophical distortion, priestly subterfuge, and abuse of the power of legislators and politicians to subjugate the people. The times in which dangerous germs of free-thinking could be injected while protesting the most perfect Catholic orthodoxy are over.

Equally finished is the merely naturalistic criticism of miracles so dear to the "libertinage érudit," its comparison of the origins of the various religions having led to nothing more than a static and rather inert religious indifferentism. These "libertins" remained Catholics, preaching the need for external conformity, and generally offering historico-theoretical justifications of absolutism.

The two traditions have clearly merged. The naturalistic and libertine idea of legislators founding the great religions upon a basis of political cunning and deceit, as elucidated in Campanella, in Naudé, and in *Theophrastus Redivivus*, to mention only the better-known examples, is being gradually replaced by a notion of imposture rooted in mental aberration, primitive ignorance, some sort of "heart of darkness" of the human intellect. Imposture as "unreason" takes over from imposture as "fraud."

The theme took on a new form in England. Conyers Middleton, in his *A Letter from Rome*, dated 1729, denounced the "pious frauds of the Romish Church," whose new priests were no different from pagans "in the art of forging these holy impostures,"⁴² while Toland shifted the terms of the polemic with a reminder that the Ebionites considered the Apostle Paul an apostate from the law, rejecting his Epistles as those "of an Enemy and an Impostor."⁴³ Other voices, albeit of exiles, were also raised in England to swell the chorus. One

⁴¹ On this question see my *Trattato dei tre impostori*, pp. lxi-lxii and pp. 270-2.

⁴² Conyers Middleton, *A Letter from Rome* (London, 1729), p. 193.

⁴³ John Toland, *Nazarenus: or Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity* (London, 1718), p. 25.

in particular is worth listening to, that of the Piedmontese Count Alberto Radicati of Passerano.⁴⁴

He came from one of the best-known families of the subalpine aristocracy. Close to Giannone and to the Italian reformers, he was, however, a heretic, a solitary man whose isolation struck his contemporaries, and whose independence was read as eccentricity. Around 1725, he decided the time was ripe to offer a programme of political and religious reforms to Victor Amadeus II. His sovereign's answer was to persecute and exile the Count. Radicati's life in London was "celle d'un bandit," the Piedmontese ambassador declared in a letter of 22 May 1732: "Il n'est jamais un jour dans la même maison, il porte continuellement du poison sur lui."⁴⁵ His boldest attempt to deliver himself and humanity from fear through reason and truth he entitled *A Philosophical Dissertation upon Death*. Human liberty was to be defended against all comers, even at the cost of suicide. The *Dissertation*, published by the bookseller William Mears in London in late October, 1732, created a huge scandal. The Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson, sent a copy to the most influential of the secretaries of state, the Duke of Newcastle, insisting that the author, "one Passeran," be punished as a threat to public order.⁴⁶ The Attorney-General, to whom it had been shown, called the *Dissertation* "the most impious and immoral book I have ever read."⁴⁷ On 27 November, the publisher and translator were both arrested, and Radicati held for questioning, only to be released on bail shortly afterwards. Writing in English, he declared that "The truth is that I fled from my country only to keep away from the wrath of the papal clergy."⁴⁸ He trusted the ideological freedom of England, although a violent press campaign followed the publication of the *Dissertation*. In the *London Magazine*, one critic wrote that in Italy and Spain "ecclesiastical savages" most certainly abounded, but that Radicati had proved that

⁴⁴ On this radical Italian free-thinker, see Franco Venturi, *Saggi sull'Europa Illuminista. I. Alberto Radicati di Passerano* (Torino: Einaudi, 1954).

⁴⁵ Cavalier Ossorio to the Marquis d'Ormea, 22 May 1732, quoted in Venturi, *Saggi*, p. 208.

⁴⁶ S.P. 36/28, f. 83, Edmund Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 4 November 1732, at the Record Office, London.

⁴⁷ S.P. 36/28, f. 111, P. Yorke to Charles Delafaye, 15 November 1732, at the Record Office, London.

⁴⁸ S.P. 36/28, f. 112, Alberto Radicati to the Duke of Newcastle, 27 November 1732, at the Record Office, London.

he belonged to a race that was even more dangerous, “the unnatural savages.”⁴⁹ He should never have been allowed to attack morals and religion with such vehemence. Rumours of the scandal even reached the Court of Saint James. On 1 December 1732, Queen Caroline, George II’s wife, “expressed her resentment against a pamphlet lately published, entitled *A Philosophical Dissertation upon Death*, . . . wherein the author embraces the atheism of Spinoza and afterwards draws conclusions from his doctrine that destroy all society and virtue.”⁵⁰ What was it that was so threatening, so disquieting about this text that even English censorship, tolerant to a fault with so many dangerous deistic tracts, would not allow its circulation? The reasons can be traced to the book’s combination of a strongly materialistic form of naturalism and an attack upon the religious superstitions induced by cunning impostors. Radicati was indeed very much indebted to the clandestine *Traité des trois imposteurs*, and we know that he possessed up to five different manuscripts of it.⁵¹ “In all countries and at all times there have been found ambitious men who . . . for thirst for dominion over others . . . employed cunning and artifice. . . . After this manner the fear of the gods came to take impression in the hearts of men. . . . This credence established in human minds, men feared to die.”⁵² Thus, in order to entrench their power, the impostors created, amongst other things, the fear of death. In Radicati’s view this fear is not innate, but comes into being with the knowledge of the danger of death. Death in itself is simply a change in the state of matter. This was one of the most radical products of the theme of imposture, revisited in a blend of Hobbes and Spinoza via the *Traité*. More radical tracts were to follow in mid-century, such as the clandestine manuscript *Brunus Redivivus*; on the other hand, the position of extreme caution adopted by the *Encyclopédie* on the subject is extremely interesting. The entry under “Imposture” is thin and under-nourished. The author does not so much as touch upon the politico-religious problem, but contents himself with a description of “l’imposture médicale.” But the prize for moderation here

⁴⁹ See “The London Magazine or A Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer,” (November 1732), p. 408.

⁵⁰ S.P. 36/28, f. 45, at the Record Office, London.

⁵¹ See F. G. C. Rütz, *Kleine Bydragen tot de Dèistische Letter-kunde, Eerste Stuk. Behelzende eenige Byzonderheden, raakende de Schriften en Lotgevallen van den Geweezen’ Dèeist Albert Radicati, Graaf van Passeran* (’s-Gravenhage, 1781), p. 11.

⁵² *A Philosophical Dissertation upon Death* (London, 1732), pp. 22–3.

must surely go to Voltaire who, upon the second reprint of the *Traité* wrote:

Inspide écrivain, qui crois à tes lecteurs,
Crayonner les portraits des Trois Imposteurs,
D'où vient que sans esprit tu fais le quatrième?⁵³

Meanwhile, on the opposite front, the great anti-Christian offensive had begun, led on the publishing front by the Baron of Holbach and Marc-Michel Rey, his Amsterdam publisher. Texts such as the *Traité*, the *Essai sur les Préjugés*, *Le Militaire Philosophe*, and the *Examen des apologistes de la Religion Chrétienne* thus received a new lease of circulation. Shortly afterwards, in 1788, Sylvain Maréchal was to write the names of their authors, Fréret, Boulainvilliers, Dumarsais, in his *Almanach des honnetes gens*,⁵⁴ symbols of the new humanity which had snatched away the mask of political and priestly imposture, releasing the forces of truth. Its laborious and heroic season of growth, however, was over by the 1730s.

⁵³ *A l'auteur du livre des trois imposteurs* (1769), in Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1877), 10:402.

⁵⁴ See Sylvain Maréchal, *Almanach des honnetes gens* (n.p., 1788), p. 43.

JUSTIN A. I. CHAMPION

Conferring with Dick Popkin

It was the obscure Egyptian physician, Dr. Henry Morelli, who brought Dick Popkin and myself together in 1989–90 although I had been intellectually intimate with his work since the late 1970s. The *History of Scepticism* was a powerfully formative book for a young man predisposed to look for arguments useful against any form of authority: it ought to be prescribed reading for any adolescent who wishes to be provided with effective rebuttals against the tyrannies of teachers, parents, society, etc. In the spring of 1989, I was working in a research institute in London University. I had recently completed my Ph.D. research into irreligion and blasphemy in the later seventeenth century and was searching for new avenues of research as well as tying up the invariably loose ends of earlier work. The focus of my research had been the life and writings of John Toland (1670–1722), a maverick republican scholar who was intimate with most of the counter-cultural milieux of his age. Toland's letters bristled with obscure names and dangerous connections. One of the most obscure letters involved Toland giving a succinct account of Giordano Bruno's *Spaccio*. In his preliminary material he had mentioned a Dr. Henry Morelli with whom he had the occasional conversation. Who this man was had repeatedly eluded me over the course of six or seven years of investigation. At the same time as I was pondering publishing a short piece on Toland's letter, I heard rumours of a Fellowship, funded by the Foundation for Intellectual History, to do research into the *Traité des trois imposteurs*. For some reason, although the deadline for applications had expired, I sent a fax to Popkin including a brief description of my interests and a photocopy of Toland's letter. Almost by return of fax I had a response from Popkin: who was I? What did I know about Morelli? How did Toland know him? As an afterthought was appended an offer of a Fellowship at Leiden. I have had a fondness for Morelli ever since.

The Fellowship at Leiden was a revelation. It was my first extended

contact with a scholar of Popkin's reputation and character. Dick's company was erudite, witty, and wicked. He talked to all, young and old, with the same respect and interest. Whether at dinner or at lunch, Dick, although not in the best of health, would entertain and illuminate. The first seminars Dick led in Leiden were spell-binding: although on reflection one might dispute or disagree with some of his points, when listening to his gruff voice weaving a web of connections, personal and intellectual, one was drawn into his narrative. Since Leiden I have met Dick in Dublin, London, and Los Angeles: he is without doubt one of the most innovative and generous historians I have ever encountered. For Dick the point of scholarship is to make connections, to explore blind alleys, to challenge shibboleths: unlike many historians of stature these objectives are not contrived to puff his own reputation or ego. Dick dispenses ideas to younger scholars with enormous liberality: how often has he started off a conversation with the phrase "You might want to look at. . . ." For Dick the point is to get the work done not to garner kudos. Almost single-handedly Dick has kick-started a series of historiographical questions: he still seems two steps ahead of the game half of the time. The point of his commitment to historical enquiry is that we all benefit from his enthusiasm and encouragement: Dick not only provides the intellectual infrastructure but also, and perhaps more importantly, the material and social context for historians (young and old) to communicate across cultural, linguistic, and political boundaries. Most of our correspondence is now done by email: inquiries for reading on obscure individual are always met promptly usually accompanied by some treasonable remark about the British Monarchy. This combination of erudition and political engagement sums Dick Popkin up.

PERE RICHARD SIMON AND
ENGLISH BIBLICAL CRITICISM, 1680–1700

Justin A. I. Champion

Section 1

Corresponding with Limborch in September, 1685, about the thorny issues of textual integrity and inspiration raised by Leclerc's rebuttal of Richard Simon's writings, John Locke pinpointed the critical problem:

if everything in holy writ is to be considered without distinction as equally inspired by God then this surely provides philosophers with a great opportunity for casting doubt on our faith and sincerity. If on the contrary, certain parts are to be considered as purely human writings, then where in the Scripture will there be found the certainty of divine authority, without which the Christian religion will fall to the ground.

Establishing criteria or measures of critical judgement in these matters was a question and task of the "utmost degree fundamental."¹ Locke himself entertained doubts and anxieties about the authenticity of different parts of the canonical works long before he had read Leclerc: he hoped he might be relieved of such scruples by careful examination of Scripture.² Criticism and scholarship was a necessary, important, and powerful solvent of textual ambiguity for Locke: so powerful that it must be used piously and discreetly. Devout scholars of the Church of England such as Bishop Brian Walton, Henry Hammond, Bishop John Fell, and John Mill, had all applied their learning to preserving the original scripture in the massive volumes of criticism and textual editions that were published between the late 1650s and the 1670s. From the colossus of the *Polyglot Bible* (6 volumes,

¹ For their comments, contributions and suggestions I would very much like to thank and acknowledge Michael Hunter, Scott Mandelbrote, and Robert Iliffe. See *The Correspondence of John Locke*, 8 vols., ed. E. S. de Beer (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 2:748–9, (No. 834).

² *Locke Correspondence*, 2:751 (No. 834).

1656–1658) which brought together the work of many leading scholars under the general editorship of Brian Walton, through the multi-volume folios of the *Critici Sacri* (10 volumes, 1660) co-ordinated by Bishop John Pearson, to the only relatively short abridgement of current criticism found in the Presbyterian Matthew Poole's *Synopsis Criticorum* (4 volumes, 1669–76) and its English abridgement that went through many editions after its first in 1683 (folio, 2 volumes), the orthodox were not afraid of criticism, simply very meticulous and cautious. The controversial points of scholarship (the various readings, the debates about interpolations, prophetic inspiration, and vowel points) were all firmly locked away in the Latinate language of the elite. Indeed much of Brian Walton's anger at the attacks the Independent divine John Owen made upon the *Polyglot Bible* was because he conducted the debate in the vernacular, opening difficult and dangerous matters to an ignorant and easily confused audience.³ Criticism was important but it had to be careful, decorous and godly or else it fall into the pits of impiety and atheism. So for example, although the works of Hobbes and Spinoza raised genuine points of criticism and scholarship about the historicity and textuality of Scripture, their work was almost uniformly reviled as corrupt and atheistical: since neither *Leviathan* (1651) nor the *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* (1670) bore the marks of true criticism, they could be dismissed as ungodly without detailed rebuttal. The work of the French Oratorian priest Pere Richard Simon (1638–1712) posed a set of more profound and complicated discursive problems: it was both learned and potentially corrosive of all scriptural certainties.

Richard Simon, published his most controversial work, the *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* [HCVT] in Paris in 1678. Much to his genuine surprise, the work raised fierce opposition from the powerful figure of Bossuet who had been shown only selections from the text and an index of its contents. Having examined the pre-publication samples Bossuet declared "that the book was a mass of impieties and a rampart of freethinking."⁴ Consequently virtually the entire print run was destroyed in late July, 1678, only a few copies escaping (as

³ I am currently working on the production, reception, and critique of the Walton *Polyglot*.

⁴ For an excellent account of the censorship of the HCVT, see P. J. Lambe, "Biblical Criticism and Censorship in Ancien regime France: The Case of Richard Simon," in *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985), pp. 149–77; cited at p. 156. For an account of Simon's later encounter with the censors, see J. Woodbridge, "Censure

we will see below) to England and Holland for later publication. The first complete and unhindered French edition of the work was finally published in Rotterdam by Reinier Leers in 1685 complete with additional material in response to two of his early critics, Charles de Veil and Frederic Spanheim, Jr. Although disgraced in France, Simon continued his work on Scripture and published (almost simultaneously in French and English) the important first volume of the *Histoire Critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* [HCNT] in 1689 which was followed up by two further tomes (on the manuscript traditions and New Testament Commentaries and the Church Fathers) between 1690 and 1693.⁵ In addition to researching materials for his critical works Simon was also preparing for his own edition of the New Testament and editing works on the Greek orthodox church and the history of ecclesiastical revenues. Simon was then a man of staggering erudition.

As author of critical histories of the Old and New Testaments the title of the father of Biblical Criticism is commonly conferred on Simon: I suspect that Simon is perhaps more commonly referred to than actually read. Except for a few important works, there have been few major studies of Simon's life and works. Most of the more recent French studies have been concerned to preserve Simon's reputation as a pious and orthodox Catholic against charges of irreligion.⁶ Except for a handful of chapters and articles anglophone scholarship has almost entirely ignored any profound engagement with either his life and works and, perhaps more importantly, the history of the reception of his ideas in England has been shamefully ignored.⁷ Much

Royale et censure episcopale: le conflit de 1702," *Dix-huitième siècle* 8 (1976), pp. 333–55.

⁵ The first and second volumes of his study of the New Testament were published in England in 1689 and 1692. The third volume, principally on commentaries on Scripture, has never been translated.

⁶ The major studies in French are: H. Margival, *Essai sur Richard Simon et la critique biblique au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1900); J. Steinmann, *Richard Simon et les origines des exegese biblique* (Paris: Éditions d'Aujourd'hui, 1960); P. Auvray, *Richard Simon 1638–1712. Étude bio-bibliographique avec des textes inédits* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974). For more recent work, see J. Woodbridge, "Richard Simon le pere de la critique biblique," in J.-P. Armogathe, ed., *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989), pp. 193–206. Important manuscript findings have been published by J. Lebrun and J. Woodbridge, eds., *Additions aux Recherches curieuse sur la diversite du langues et religions d'Edward Brerewood* (Paris: P.U.F., 1983).

⁷ On the reception of Simon in Germany, see J. Woodbridge, "German Responses to the Biblical Critic Richard Simon from Leibnitz to J. S. Semler," in *Wolfenbütteler*

of the historiography has treated Simon either as simply Catholic apologist or radical antiscripturalist. More recently Simon has been placed in a far more complex variety of contexts: Lebrun and Woodbridge have exposed the depth of his involvement with Protestant circles in Charenton in the mid-1670s, while other scholars have explored his intimacy with Rabbinical circles and the "Karaites."⁸ One simple route scholars might have taken, and still can, into the complex and multi-confessional world that Simon inhabited (and in some sense constructed) is to explore his printed correspondence.⁹ The *Lettres Choiesies* (revised edition, 4 volumes, Amsterdam 1730) reveal a series of connections and exchanges with all varieties of men from arch-heretics such as Isaac la Peyrère to obscure Englishmen and Protestant refugees. A combination of historiographical myopia (and perhaps linguistic disability) has meant that this resource for exploring Simon's intellectual geography has been neglected. French historians of ideas have perhaps not written about Simon's reception on anglophone shores because of an intuition that it might not add any insight to understanding his work. English historians have long been notorious both for avoiding the history of ideas and insisting that anything of worth stopped at the cliffs of Dover. Late 17th-century intellectual culture was far more cosmopolitan and permeable than its modern replacement.¹⁰

Forschungen Historische Kritik und biblischer Kanon in der deutschen Aufklärung 41 (1989), pp. 67–80. The most significant discussions of Simon have occurred in works exploring the work of John Dryden: L. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1934), pp. 98–108; and P. Harth, *Contexts of Dryden's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). More recently, G. Reedy, *The Bible and Reason. Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985), has explored some of the Anglican contexts for the reception of Simon's work.

⁸ On the Jewish connection, see Y. Kaplan, "Karaites in early Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam," in D. Katz and J. Israel, eds., *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 196–236, especially pp. 221–229 on Simon and the Karaites. See also J. Van den Berg and E. van der Wall, eds., *Jewish Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century. Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), especially J. Van den Berg "Proto-Protestants? The Image of the Karaites as a Mirror of the Catholic-Protestant Controversy in the Seventeenth Century," pp. 33–49.

⁹ One suspects from the lack of modern archival research that many more letters survive in manuscript. For one such important finding, see J. Lebrun "Vingt-quatre Lettres Inédites de Richard Simon (1638–1712)," in *Lias* 20 (1993), pp. 67–119.

¹⁰ For some sense of the connections in the period, see A. Goldgar, *Impolite Learning. Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters 1680–1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Exploring the English reception of Simon's works, and indeed the network of personal associations made by him with English figures and residents, will both illuminate and throw into relief Simon's own thought, but also bring us back to how and why men like Locke and Newton could appropriate his work to their own purposes. On the 19th of March, 1682, a worried John Evelyn wrote to John Fell, Bishop of Oxford: he wished to highlight:

how great danger and fatal consequences the "Histoire Critique", not long since published in French by Pere Simon, and now lately translated (though but ill translated) into English, exposes not only the Protestant and the whole Reformed Churches abroad, but (what ought to be dearer to us) the Church of England at home, which with them acknowledges the Holy Scriptures alone to be the canon and rule of faith.

Simon's work, continued Evelyn, boldly set out not only to "unsettle but destroy" the certainty of Scripture. According to Evelyn the work was very successful: "it hugely prevails already." The fatal mischief was created because the work was not perceived as a work of "some daring wit, or young Lord Rochester revived," but because the "learned" author was regarded as "a sober and judicious person." Indeed Evelyn insisted that the work was a "masterpiece" of criticism: "the man is well studied in Oriental tongues, and has carried on his project with a spirit and address not ordinary amongst critics." The resultant work was however pernicious. While it was difficult to know "whether he really be a papist, Socinian, or merely a Theist, or something of all three," the product of his work was to undermine holy scripture: "he tells the world he can establish no doctrines or principles upon them." Evelyn's purpose was to prompt (indeed implore) Fell to encourage the "pens and Chairs" of Oxford on all occasions to assert and defend the common cause.¹¹ An English edition of the HCVT had appeared in late 1681: it was not however the first sight of the text in the country. Paradoxically it was to England that two of the few surviving copies of the original 1678 imprint of HCVT came: it was from these copies that the faulty edition of Amsterdam (1680) and the later English versions were made. The story of its importation to British shores highlights

¹¹ See W. Bray, ed., *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn FRS*, 4 vols. (London, 1894), 3:264-7.

some of the ambiguities of contemporary understandings of the status of Simon's work. In contradistinction to Evelyn, the man responsible for bringing the HCVT to England, Henri Justel (1620–1693), although a pious Protestant who became a refugee in England in late 1681, thought the work was of potential worthy purpose.

The connection with Justel brings Simon's work physically and intellectually close to English circles: Justel was not merely a correspondent with Simon but also John Locke. In March and April, 1678, Justel wrote to Henry Compton, Bishop of London, who had long established links with Protestant communities on the continent.¹² Justel was sending copies (on Simon's instructions) of the HCVT to both Compton and Clarendon, men whom had made the author's acquaintance in Paris:¹³ but he was concerned to prepare the ground for their reception. He was well aware that the book might generate fears and doubts: "son ouvrage est attendu parce quil est hardi." Justel hoped that some able English speaking critic might be able to accommodate Simon's work to pious purposes.¹⁴ Justel's ambitions were frustrated: the man he thought might be suitable to explain Simon's work to the English speaking world, Charles Marie de Veil, indeed published a swift and hostile response in French (translated into English in 1682 to counter the translation).¹⁵ Justel had corresponded with Simon since early 1672; he was to continue doing so after he left Paris for England in mid-1681 and stayed until 1686.¹⁶ These letters are ample testimony to the potential for critical dialogue between the Simonian position and Protestantism. In the course of their exchanges they discussed matters concerning ceremonies in the Greek Church,¹⁷ rabbinical learning,¹⁸ and matters of textual

¹² The only major study of Compton, *Protestant Bishop*, by E. Carpenter (London: SPCK, 1957) has no reference to this affair.

¹³ For Simon's account, see *Lettres Choisiées* IV, No. 9 (February 1679) to R.P.D.B., pp. 52–60, esp. p. 58.

¹⁴ For a convenient transcription of Justel's letters from Bodleian Ms. Rawlinson C 984, see Appendix B in Bredvold, *Intellectual Milieu*, pp. 159–61.

¹⁵ See C. M. de Veil, *Lettre de Mr De Veil* (London, 1678). De Veil, a Jew from Metz, had been converted to Catholicism by Bossuet, lived in England, and held a living in Fulham in 1678. He was later reported to have turned Anabaptist. See Bredvold, *Intellectual Milieu*, p. 102. Simon commented on his conversion to Protestantism in *Lettres Choisiées* I, p. 87.

¹⁶ The *Lettres Choisiées* has 12 letters from Simon to Justel between 1672 and 1686.

¹⁷ *Lettres Choisiées* II, No. 12 (March, 1672), pp. 81–82; IV, Nos. 2–3 (1675) pp. 10–20.

¹⁸ *Lettres Choisiées* II, No. 14 (1673), p. 92; II, No. 27 (1685), p. 87; III, No. 16 (1680), p. 107.

criticism.¹⁹ Simon made enquiries about whether Justel might procure copies of difficult to obtain books from his friends in London and Oxford. Simon described the Jewish literature held in the Oratorian library, discussing at some length the Karaite commentary on the Pentateuch which he had used in his critical work. Indeed, Simon commented that he was addicted to reading the rabbinical scholarship in the library: he even tried to ration his time spent. Simon was keen to know what treasures lay in the English archives in comparison with the holdings available to him in France.²⁰ Simon discussed the fiasco of the censorship of his book in some detail with Justel, disputing the motives and privileges of his oppressors.²¹ Simon was also clearly intrigued by the diversity of religious practice in England. Justel had reported that he had attended Anglican, Puritan, and Anabaptist places of worship: Simon commented rather ruefully perhaps pondering his own situation "les Angloise sont de grand *chercheurs* en matiere de religion."²² The main significance of this correspondence is to be found in its continuity. Justel still manifested interest in Simon's work in the 1690s.²³ He kept up his connection with the critic even after the hostile reception both the French and English editions of the HCVT received. Contrary to Evelyn's assertions and anxieties, a man such as Justel did not feel that either communicating with Simon or championing his work would compromise true religion.

That other Englishmen had a similarly relaxed interest in Simon can be established by exploring the relationship between Henri Justel and John Locke. Again there is another surprising irony embedded in the connection. John Locke on his travels in France between 1675 and 1679 took every opportunity to converse with men of learning. One of the enduring associations he made was with Nicholas Toinard whom he met at Henri Justel's house in June 1677.²⁴ It was

¹⁹ *Lettres Choiesies* II, No. 26 (1685), p. 184; II, No. 28 (1685), p. 193.

²⁰ *Lettres Choiesies* I, No. 7 (March, 1682), pp. 85–89.

²¹ *Lettres Choiesies* II, No. 18 (15 December, 1678), pp. 113–19.

²² *Lettres Choiesies* I, No. 7 (20 March, 1682), p. 89. In this letter Simon also inquired after the motives for the conversion of De Veil, see p. 87.

²³ See British Library Add. Mss. 22, 910, folios 426 and 428.

²⁴ For the meeting with Toinard, see J. Lough *Locke's Travels in France, 1675–1679* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); also see the biographical entry in the *Locke Correspondence*, 1:579–82. For Locke and Toinard, see John Marshall, *John Locke. Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), *passim*.

Toinard who had forwarded samples of Simon's work to Bossuet which had resulted in the pulping of the volumes.²⁵ Locke met with Justel frequently in France: their intimacy was such that Justel not only recommended places and sights for Locke to see but also supplied him with a bibliography of important works to examine: unfortunately it does not contain any mention of the HCVT.²⁶ That Locke knew of Justel's connections with Simon is clear: Toinard had written to Locke reporting "une petite brouillerie au sujet du P. Simon exoratorian" at Justel's house.²⁷ Just as he had written to Compton to find a man who might be able to communicate the non-controversial elements of the HCVT, so Justel also asked Locke whether he could suggest anyone who might make such a response to Simon's efforts, which he described positively as "un recueil de lettres qui sont pleines d'érudition Rabinesque et d'autres choses curieuses."²⁸ References to the HCVT litter their exchanges: Locke had presumably asked the Frenchman to get him a copy of the work. On the 15/25 November 1679, Justel wrote to an impatient Locke, "vous avez a la fin L'Histoire critique de la Bible avec une anticritique qui sera bonne et qui vaudra la Critique: mais il faut attendre encore un peu et avoir patience".²⁹ In May, 1680, Justel announced to Locke "le livre du Pere Simon est imprime en Hollande," before continuing to comment that the responses of Spanheim and others had been "tres bien faicte et tres exacte." By June, 1681, Locke most likely had a copy of the 1680 HCVT: the subject of his exchanges with Justel still concerned Simon, but had moved on from the HCVT to his edition of Leon of Modena's book on Jewish religious ceremonies.³⁰ Evidence from Locke's library catalogue shows that he had a full range of Simon's works, owning both the 1680 and 1685 edi-

²⁵ See J. Woodbridge, "Richard Simon le pere de la critique biblique," p. 196.

²⁶ For the meetings with Justel, see Lough, *Locke's Travels*, pp. 175–6, 197, 198, 255, and 273. The recommendations for sightseeing and reading are to be found in Ms. Locke C 12 folios. 47 and following.

²⁷ *Locke Correspondence*, 2:18 (No. 469, 10 May, 1679). I like to think (on no evidence at all) that the "brouillerie" was prompted by Justel discovering that Toinard had been in some measure responsible for the fate of HCVT. Justel was still in correspondence with Toinard in 1680: see British Library Add Mss. 29317 folios 7, 8, and 9.

²⁸ Justel to Locke, 17/27 September, 1679, *Locke Correspondence*, 2:105–6 (No. 504).

²⁹ *Locke Correspondence*, 2:129 (No. 515).

³⁰ *Locke Correspondence*, Vol. 2, Nos. 64 and 651.

tions of HCVT.³¹ Further manuscript sources show that Locke indeed read the HCVT carefully and took notes.³²

Section 2

If the Wing catalogue of 17th-century books is consulted there are two entries for the translation of Simon's HCVT in 1682, one under the imprint of Jacob Tonson the other of Walter Davis. The work was translated into English as *A Critical History of the Old Testament* [CHOT].³³ An advertisement for the work appeared in the newsletter, *Loyal Protestant and True Domestic Intelligence*, on January 14, 1682. The two issues are, in the main body of the text, identical: the title page, the authorial preface, the table of contents, and the three books of the work are identical. Similarly both editions have two supplementary catalogues "of the Chief Editions of the Bible" and "of Jewish and other Authours." The Tonson issue also has two leaves containing three prefatory poems ("To his Friend the Translator of Father Simon," "To the Ingenious Translator," and "To the Authors and Translators of the Following Book") and an additional work of translation of some fifty pages: *An Answer to Mr Spanheim's Letter*. The Davis imprint was translated by "A Person of Quality"; the Tonson issue identified this person as "HD." The latter also had three other identifying initials attached to the commendatory poems: "RD," "NL," and "NT."³⁴ So between late 1681 [Davis issue] and May,

³¹ See P. Laslett and J. Harrison, *The Library Catalogue of John Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), entry for "Simon, R Nos. 2673–2682." Of particular importance are entries 2673 HCVT 4° Rotterdam 1685 667 L.85 L.¹⁰/₁₉; and 2673^a HCVT 4° Paris 1680. The latter entry is included, as explained in Appendix, pp. 14–16, from Ms. Locke b.2 "Lists of Books aquired by Locke, bills, letters and other papers about the purchase, storing, and dispatch of books, 1674–1704."

³² See Bodleian Ms. Locke f. 32. It is clear from Locke's method of citation that, in this notebook on the Old Testament, Locke transcribed passages and comments from the 1685 edition of HCVT (Library catalogue entry 2673). This fact, of course, does not preclude Locke both owning and reading the earlier edition. Indeed, given the evidence of the 1680 publication, the English translations in 1682 and 1684, plus the English publication of a Latin edition in 1684, it seems unlikely that Locke waited until 1685 to read the HCVT, especially given the evidence of his impatience. For Locke's notes from Simon see footnote 73 below.

³³ See Wing entries S3796 [Tonson] and S3796A [Davis].

³⁴ Dryden scholars have tentatively identified these initials as Richard Duke, Nahum Tate, and Nathaniel Lee. Both Duke and Tate published the poems included

1682 [Tonson issue], there appears to have been a flurry of printing activity relating to the CHOT. The implication of the publication of two similar but distinct editions might have been that demand for the work was intense. Indeed Evelyn's remarks that it had "hugely prevailed" would support this interpretation. The reality was somewhat different.

In June 1683, the London Bookseller, Jacob Tonson, took out a suit in Chancery against a young lawyer of the Doctor's Commons Henry Dickinson.³⁵ The latter was a little known graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, whose only other minor brush with history was to be indicted, along with another London bookseller Robert Moon, for writing a "scandalous libel" against John Tillotson, the then Dean of Canterbury.³⁶ Tonson had accused Dickinson of duping him over the printing and sale of the CHOT. It is from within the disputes between Tonson and Dickinson that the dual issue arose. Dickinson had approached the successful bookseller in May 1681 with a proposal to publish his translation of Simon's work: he swore that "it was a learned discourse & contained nothing but what was agreeable to sound doctrine and good manners." Tonson, convinced, engaged the printer Miles Fletcher to produce the volume: the cost to be split between Dickinson and the bookseller. Rumours of the book containing "several things which might bring the publisher into some danger," prompted Tonson to withdraw his support from the title. After a meeting with Dickinson in the Fleece Tavern, Fleetstreet, Tonson passed the issue over to Dickinson who arranged for Walter Davis to sell the book. Ultimately sales went slowly: Tonson complained it was slow "to goe off for ready money." Dickinson somehow persuaded Tonson to re-accept the title. In return for settlement of some £100 in debts to the printers and paper supplier, Dickinson

in CHOT in their own later collected works. Duke also identified HD as Henry Dickinson. See Bredvold, *Intellectual Milieu*, p. 106; H. T. Swedenberg, ed., *The Works of John Dryden. Poems, 1681-1684* (California: University of California Press, 1972), Vol. 2, p. 340.

³⁵ For an account of Tonson that does not make much reference to this case, see K. M. Lynch, *Jacob Tonson. Kit Kat Publisher* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971).

³⁶ This account is drawn extensively from C. E. Ward "Religio Laici and Father Simon's History," in H. T. Swedenberg, ed., *Essential Articles for the Study of John Dryden* (London, 1966), pp. 225-32. Ward refers to the Chancery Suit PRO C. 8/284/205 of Tonson against Dickinson. See also CPSD 1683 pp. 428 and 433 on the later instance.

gave Tonson the supplementary translations and poems, presumably in the hope that this would inspire better sales. Dickinson finally provoked Tonson into taking a suit out against him by demanding a share of the profits of the sales of the second issue, contrary to Tonson's understanding of their arrangement.

The publication of CHOT was a messy affair: Tonson, known for his propriety, clearly saw it as a commercial enterprise alone. Any suggestion of impiety was anathema to him. Dickinson on the other hand, although he said that the "principle end he aimed at in the translation . . . was the pleasing of his father,"³⁷ was committed to the publication. Given that we can say, with some confidence, that Tonson had little if any involvement in the presentation of the book, Dickinson must have been responsible for the way the book was marketed. In all of the prefatory material—prose or poetry—little attention was drawn either to the author's Catholicism or to the irreligious implications of the text. Dickinson presented the work as a well "from whence we may draw convincing Argument for the confuting of all the atheistical opinions of our Age."³⁸ Here was true learning that, properly interpreted, would resolve "the difficulties of the Scriptures": to be scandalized by the text was to miss its point. The commendatory poems echoed these points:

Nor let ill-grounded, superstitious fear
fright any but the fools from reading here
the sacred oracles may well endure
th'exaltest search, of their own truth secure
Though at this press some noisy zealots bawl
And to their aid a numerous Faction call
with stretch'd out arms, as if the Ark could fall;
Yet wiser heads will thinks so firm it stands
That, were it shook, 'twould need no mortal hands.

Simon was lauded as the restorer of truth, rather than as a papist destabilising Protestant certainties, which had been the thrust of other critical responses. Simon was refashioned into a relatively safe "Protestant" text. Nahum Tate made this point explicitly:

As Esdras once did into Order Draw
And, to the new freed Tribes, revive the Law;
so you, from chains of Darkness which they wore

³⁷ Ward, "Religio Laici and Father Simon's History," p. 227.

³⁸ CHOT, "To the Reader."

The Captiv'd oracles themselves restore . . .
 To vindicate the Sacred Books, A new
 But onely Certain Method, you persue,
 And shewing Th'are corrupted, prove 'em true.

Beyond these additional pieces Simon's text was left alone to speak for itself: later publications of his work on the New Testament would be accompanied by material that drew attention to his Catholicism and to the danger of his arguments to the Protestant rule of faith. It is important to pause and reflect here on the context in which the CHOT was published. The early years of the 1680s had been rocked by the politico-religious crisis of the Popish Plot and Exclusion. The nation was on the verge of civil war. By 1682 the republican extremists around Shaftesbury and Sidney were preparing themselves for armed insurrection. Indeed Locke was in the process of drafting his call to arms against popish tyranny. By 1682 Charles II had regained authority in London and was in the process of purging radicals political or religious: the time hardly seem propitious for publishing a dangerous work by an identifiable Roman Catholic. That the publication did not attract massive repression (like it had in France) is testimony to the ambivalence of its content and meaning: as we have seen Justel and Evelyn could come to quite opposed and contrary understandings. Perhaps further testimony can be attested for the ambivalence of attitudes towards Simonian criticism in the still on-going debates about how precisely to classify Dryden's response to the CHOT in his *Religio Laici* (1683). Dryden's poem, an elegant and acute précis of CHOT, is balanced between critique and applause for Simon's promotion of critical method and tradition. Dryden appears to use criticism as a means of damning not simply Catholic tradition but also any priesthood that would impose, without authority, any interpretation contrary to "plain" meaning.³⁹ Although hostile works such as those of Charles Marie de Veil and Dubois de La Cour attempted to fix the anti-Protestant interpretation of the CHOT as the only reading, it is clear that contemporaries saw the

³⁹ For a useful summary of the current state of play in Dryden studies, see O. Kenshur, "Scriptural Deism and the Politics of Dryden's *Religio Laici*," in *ELH* 54 (1987), pp. 869–92. S. Zwicker, in *Politics and Language in Dryden's Poetry. The Arts of Disguise* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1984), has suggested that the Simonian parts of *Religio Laici* were originally intended to accompany the other commendatory verse in CHOT: pp. 122–33. Tonson was Dryden's publisher: the other contributors could be thought of as moving within Dryden's milieu.

work as different things: some as Catholic apologetic, others as important revisionist criticism, and still further as a handbook of irreligion and atheism.⁴⁰

If the publishing history and reception of CHOT is complex, it has at least been examined in some detail by the literary scholars. The same cannot be said for the second important edition of Simon's work that was published in English and Latin in 1684. The standard account of Simon's work suggests that the text was prepared by Simon and then sent to friends in London for publication: as Auvray continues the text was "extrait edulcore des deux premieres parties de l'histoire critique d'ou l'auteur a exclu tout ce qui concerne la critique litteraire aussi que certains hors d'oeuvres trop techniques."⁴¹ It has long been claimed, and indeed the prefatory apparatus to the 1684 works suggests, Simon's authorship: this view is untenable. In the *Term Catalogues* for June, 1684, there are two entries. The first registers *Critical Enquiries into the Various editions of the Bible, printed in divers places at several times*, [CE] translated by "MR" on sale for 5 shillings, printed for Robert Hughes at the Unicorn in Paternoster Row. The second entry in the list of Latin books for Trinity term entered the title *Disquisitiones criticae de variis per diversa loca et tempora Biblionum editionibus* [DC] printed for Richard Chiswell of St Pauls Churchyard.⁴² The Wing catalogue has the same titles registered: there is however a variant printer given for CE where "by Thomas Bradyll" replaces R. Hughes. As with the CHOT, the publishing history will tell an important story. The first named printer of CE, Robert Hughes, was a Roman Catholic printer who was later to publish Archbishop Laud's *Conference with Fisher* in 1686.⁴³ His name was replaced upon the title page by Thomas Bradyll, a radical Whig printer whose press was in Bartholomew Close and who was responsible for the publication of the neo-Harringtonian works on 'Popery and Arbitrary power' by Andrew Marvell. The Latin work DC was the work of another radical Whig printer, Richard Chiswell, an

⁴⁰ Charles Blount extracted parts of the CHOT for insertion into his *Religio Laici. Written in a letter to John Dryden* (London, 1683) and gave it the subtitle of "A Dialogue concerning Revelation," pp. 18–32, esp. pp. 22–5.

⁴¹ Auvray, *Richard Simon*, p. 85.

⁴² See E. Arber, *Term Catalogues*, Vol. II (1683–1696), pp. 82 and 85.

⁴³ For all the references to printers, unless otherwise indicated, see H. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England Scotland and Ireland from 1668–1725* (Oxford: Bibliographical Society, 1922).

associate of John Darby, who was interrogated by the Privy Council for his involvement in the publication of the semi-republican cleric Samuel Johnson's *Julian Apostate* (1683).⁴⁴ Hughes involvement was anomalous. There is evidence that Richard Chiswell was a defendant in a suit brought by Hughes for debt; perhaps he retained the registration of the title for CE in settlement of a debt. Similarly it is possible that Bradyll settled the debt for his radical Whig associate by buying up the issue. What is indisputable is that the two editions as published were produced by a radical semi-republican interest. The significance of this in suggesting an authorship other than Simon will become apparent.

To clear the ground before getting to the intricacies of the editions, it is worth giving a swift, straightforward, and uncomplicated account of the relationship between CE and DC: they are equivalents without variation, addition, or interpolation. It is impossible to distinguish which is the prior text: one possibility for the different printer registrations may have been to cover up the common origins of the English and Latin sources. The CE claims on its title page to have been "written originally in latin by father Simon of the oratory" and translated by "N.S." The *Term catalogue* entry identified the translator as "MR" as did prefatory address of the "Translator to the Reader." The discrepancy between "MR" and "NS" is too large to be accounted for as a printer's error: although it may be fanciful the dual identification may be intended to prompt the reader to ponder on the "original" authorship of Simon. Much of the thrust of the HCVT had been to indicate how scribal transmission and, especially relevant, the necessarily interpretative process of translation of scriptural originals had meant that "copies" might be "authentick" or "corrupt." The placing of the term "originall" in the title page may have been a hint to the canny reader that what was being presented was a "version" rather than what it claimed to be: of course part of Simon's wider point had been to make the connection between the claim to "originality" and the authoritative power of copies and translations. An examination of the accompanying textual apparatus may direct us to a clearer view of the authenticity of the CE.

⁴⁴ For an excellent investigation of the world of the radical underground press, see J. Hetet, "The Literary Underground of Restoration England," Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1988, pp. 175 and 186–9.

CE is prefaced by a dedication and a note from the “translator to the reader.” Both these pieces of writing assert that the text derived from an original Latin manuscript: even the French *Histoire* “which is common in every bodies hand, is only a compendium of the Latin, that has not yet seen the light.”⁴⁵ The current revised abridgement⁴⁶ was effected in Latin to stop the “ignorant and the injudicious part of his countrymen” worrying their heads about it. Similarly the text had been purged of the “few passages that in the former edition were any way obnoxious to the cavils of some.”⁴⁷ To cap this ironical presentation the translator presented a heiratic defence of the work. It was directed at two sorts of readers: “in it the learned man and scholar will find what will content him, and the common man, when he sees how many, and abstruse things must be first known before a man can arrive to a competant judgement of Scripture difficulties, will find great reason for modest and humility, and not over pragmatically to oppose his own private spirit to the wisdom of his directors.”⁴⁸ As will be illustrated the CE was almost precisely the opposite of this claim, being not a selection of the more moderate and unexceptionable passages of the HCVT, but a vulgarisation of all the most provocative elements.⁴⁹ Evidence for candidates for this abridgement is sparse: the fingers that point do, however, seem to gesture in one direction. The dedication (written by one Robert Denison dated Oxford, April, 1683) was to “the most worthy and learned J.H.”

“JH” was a man competent in “the study of Critical Animadversion.” Denison knew “how successfully for many years you have bent your studies to this sort of learning.” Moreover, “JH” was intimate both with the writings and person of Simon: as Denison recalled, “For I remember how highly you valu’d, residing in Paris, the Wit, the learning and judgment of the *Critica Sacra*, though otherwise little known to you at that time, then by his writings”.⁵⁰ “JH” was John

⁴⁵ CE, dedication A2. It has still not been unearthed, quite possibly because it never existed.

⁴⁶ Again, the language is calculated to indicate the process of editing.

⁴⁷ CE, “Translator to the Reader.”

⁴⁸ CE, “Translator to the Reader.”

⁴⁹ The “Translator,” indeed, made this inversion of intent even more ironic by suggesting not just that Simon was a reborn Erasmus, but also that he was in almost exact agreement with the pious Brian Walton editor of the London *Polyglot*: see CE, “Translator to the Reader.”

⁵⁰ CE, dedication “to the most worthy and learned J.H.”

Hampden (1653–1696): radical Whig politician, friend of Locke, and one-time patron of Isaac Newton.⁵¹ Hampden, son of Richard and grandson of the statesman John imprisoned by Charles I for refusing the Forced Loan, has received little historical attention, although he played a central part in the political radicalism of the 1680s and 1690s. Raised in the Presbyterian culture of his grandfather, Hampden received a classical education that included a period at the Middle Temple (1668) and a spell travelling in France (1670–72) where he was accompanied by a life long clerical associate, Francis Tallents, the ejected Presbyterian minister. His first rise to prominence was to be elected MP in the Whig interest for Buckinghamshire in the Exclusion parliamentary elections of 1679, 1680, and (for Wendover in his absence) in 1681.⁵² Hampden was an important liaison between the two radical power brokers, the Earl of Shaftesbury and Algernon Sidney.⁵³ At the height of the crisis of Exclusion, in late October, 1680, Hampden left the country for France, whether to seek asylum, for his health, or to raise support for republican armed insurrection is unclear. Certainly he was suspected of plotting.⁵⁴ It was on this trip that Hampden made the acquaintance of Richard Simon which was to flourish into a brief and rather one sided semi-collaborative critical enterprise. On his return to England, closely involved in the circles surrounding Sidney, Hampden committed himself to plans for full-blown insurrection. His house in Bloomsbury became the place for the first meeting of the Rye House conspirators in January, 1683.

⁵¹ For brief accounts of Hampden's life see the accounts in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, and D. C. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661–1689* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969); R. L. Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), also has a running account of Hampden's subversive activities in the 1680s. For the connection with Newton, see R. Iliffe, "Dispensing Justice: the Political Life of Isaac Newton, 1687–1691," *Historical Journal* (forthcoming).

⁵² For a brief account of his electoral victory against the Court interest, see J. R. Jones, *The First Whigs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 45–7 and 99–100. For general accounts of radical politics in the period, see R. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); J. Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Marshall, *John Locke*, especially pp. 205–92.

⁵³ Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, p. 179.

⁵⁴ See Scott, *Sidney*, pp. 280–2. Lord Preston, the English Ambassador in France, had been monitoring Hampden's travels, and commented that "in all places he hath been extremely industrious to vilify and misrepresent our Governors and Government, both in Church and State."

His complicity in the plotting is perhaps best illustrated by his close affinity with Algernon Sidney: the last letters that Sidney wrote from the Tower of London, after his imprisonment (June, 1683) for treason were to Hampden.⁵⁵ Hampden himself was imprisoned in July, 1683. Although released on bail (£30,000) in November he was tried for "high misdemeanour" at the King's Bench in February, 1684. Convicted and fined £40,000, he was imprisoned in the Tower. Upon the accession of James II and the abortive Monmouth Rebellion, Hampden was retried, this time for high treason. He was convicted and sentenced to death: after begging for his life, this was commuted to a £6,000 fine. Still a convinced radical, Hampden rebuffed James II's attempts to recruit him and was one of the first politicians to establish links with William of Orange. After the deposition of James II, Hampden, again representing Wendover, was one of the radical "True Whigs" outspoken in defence of the principle of religious toleration. In May, 1689, he spoke in defence of extending liberty to all Protestants, not simply Trinitarians; in December he argued in favour of exempting Quakers from the necessity of swearing oaths.⁵⁶ Hampden's radicalism was out of kilter with the pragmatism of Williamite politics: still suffering from the recurrent depression that had assailed him since his humiliation at the hands of James II he took his life in December 1696.

Hampden was a committed political radical: his religious confession was also unorthodox. He wrote to Tallents in May 1693, that "I have been reported a Papist, an Atheist, a Socinian, a Republican, a madman; and yet I would not go over the threshold to disprove any of these false reports. Truth is the daughter of time, and wisdom will at length be justified of all her children."⁵⁷ Hampden's reputation for religious heterodoxy was well known to contemporaries. Gilbert Burnet had commented that he was a "a young man of great

⁵⁵ See Scott, *Sidney*, pp. 301–15.

⁵⁶ See entry in B. Henning, ed., *The Commons 1660–1690* (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1983). For more detailed account of Hampden's involvements in negotiations surrounding the Toleration Act, see H. Horowitz, *Revolution Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 87–95; idem, *Parliaments, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1977); D. C. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics*, pp. 225–39. On the "true whigs," see M. A. Goldie, "The roots of true whiggism 1688–94," *History of Political Thought* 1 (1980), pp. 195–236.

⁵⁷ See BL Stowe 747 f 16 which also contains interesting remarks about the success of toleration.

parts, one of the learnedst gentlemen I ever knew; for he was a critic both in Latin, Greek and Hebrew . . . he had once great principles of religion, but he was corrupted by F. Simon's conversation at Paris."⁵⁸ Insight into Hampden's heterodoxy and Simon's role in it is provided by Hampden's own hand: in early 1688 he composed and possibly circulated a renunciation of his religious errors.⁵⁹ In this lament he freely confessed his most "heinous sins": at the foremost of his mind was "that notwithstanding my Education was very pious and religious, and the knowledge I had of the certainty of the truth of the Christian religion, yet, to obtain the reputation of wit and learning, which is so much esteemed in the world, I was so unhappy as to engage myself in the sentiments and the principles of the author of the Critical History of the Old Testament." As Hampden continued he "plainly perceived" that Simon's work "did tend to overthrow all the belief which Christians have of the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures, under pretence of giving great authority to Tradition." Hampden used his abilities to insinuate such ideas to others, "and I am afraid, I have contributed thereby to cast some of them into opinions, and perhaps practices, contrary both to the truth, and the commandments of the Christian religion." Hampden continued to give an account of his further relationship with Simon, with whom he "discoursed freely." Having learned of Simon's intentions of examining the New Testament in the same spirit as he had the Old, Hampden ruefully admitted that rather than cut off all communication with the priest, he actually encouraged his projects for a "critical polyglot Bible" by furnishing him with money. The objective of this critical edition was clear to Hampden: it was a "design which tended to destroy the certainty of the books of the New Testament as well as the Old." In a paragraph which was omitted from the printed (1733) version of Hampden's confession, he went into more detail about the "Polyglot" project. Originally the project

⁵⁸ See the article s.v. "Burnet, Gilbert," in the DNB.

⁵⁹ Multiple copies of this paper survive entitled "Lament," "Remonstrance," "Religious Errors": see BL Sloane 3299 folios 183–185; Add Mss. 6399 A folio 63; Landsdowne Mliv.5. folio 37. An account of the confession was published in *The Hazard of a Death Bed repentance* (London, 1728), p. 31, states that Hampden sent his repentance to Mr. Allix dated 15 April 1688 who passed it on to Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely. The manuscript was found in the latter's closet after death. The an incomplete copy of the confession was published in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* No. 21 (May 5th 1733), pp. 230–2. For ease of reference I will cite the printed edition with supplements from Sloane 3299 folio 184.

seemed “innocent enough in itself and might have been considerably useful in the manner it was agreed upon between father Simon, a friend of mine and myself.” Indeed Simon published a prospectus for this proposal, *Novorum Bibliorum Polyglottorum synopsis* (1684), acknowledging the involvement of “noblissimoque viro J.H.” in his opening lines. Hampden, however continued to explain, that since Simon had “soe plainly declared his thought to me in that matter” it became apparent “how the execution of this designe, would have increased in me those loose principles which I had already received from reading of the critical history.” How devout Hampden’s confession was is unclear. What it does establish is that between 1680 and 1682 he had become intimate with Simon and also that his understanding of Simon’s intentions was not that of Catholic apologetic, but a far more radical impiety.

Further evidence for Hampden’s connection with Simon can be gleaned from the correspondence between the two (1682–1685).⁶⁰ These exchanges concerned matters critical and scholarly. The early letters (1682) concerned secular manuscripts and their various editions: Simon asked Hampden to check on various manuscripts of Longinus in England. Hampden had asked Simon for advice on the best critical edition of Lactantius and the Frenchman had supplied him with an extensive bibliography recommending Thomasius’ edition “qui est la plus estimée de toutes.” Hampden had also asked Simon to verify certain of his opinion about a scriptural “manuscrit Cophte” held in the King’s Library: as Simon confirmed “il est tel qu’on vous l’a represente.” Plutarch, catalogues of Chaldaic and Syriac writers, Hebrew dictionaries, the Breviary of Cardinal Quignon, the Spanish biblical critic Maldonat, the Codex Alexandrinus, and the work of Leon of Modena were all covered in this selection of epistles. The tone of the writing is detached and scholarly whether commenting upon the difficulties of translating Coptic script or trying to obtain Modena’s work on Jewish ceremonies.⁶¹ Simon’s replies indicate some of his critical opinions: writing in 1684 he commented on the status of ancient Greek manuscripts, “vous devez supposer comme une maxime constante, que la bonté d’un Ms. Grec ne dépend pas toujours de son antiquité, parce qu’il y en a de très

⁶⁰ See *Lettres Choisies* I, pp. 218–47; II, pp. 167–83; III, p. 124; IV, p. 91.

⁶¹ Simon’s edition of Modena’s work was translated and published in France in 1674.

anciens qui sont sujets a de grands défauts.”⁶² The point to be made here is that, just as Hampden was deeply enmeshed in republican conspiracies, he was also carrying out an assault upon orthodoxy by another means. By the time of the publication of CE in 1684, Hampden was intimate with Simon and indeed funding further critical enterprises: although there is no direct evidence it seems unlikely that Hampden was not involved in the publication in some measure. Although he was imprisoned from July to November 1683, and again from February 1684 to 1686, it is clear that he still received visitors.⁶³ The Dedication of Denison to “JH” was dated “April 1683,” at least two months before Hampden was arrested: preliminary material was most often the last text printed.

Section 3

That the CE is a more radical reading of CHOT is undeniable: that it was not written by Simon is sustainable from an examination of the style, language, and intention of the text. The text of CE is drawn from books one and two of CHOT: specifically Chapters 1–8 are based upon chapters 20–27 of CHOT although the order of material in the latter is much re-arranged in CE. While, as already indicated CE, appears to be an accurate translation of DC, it does not seem to be a clearer edition of either the 1682 English edition or a new translation of the two earlier French editions (1678, 1680). In the CE, nearly all of the apparatus of scholarly reference and the exposition of variations, which made the CHOT such a “learned” production, has been cut out: none of the catalogues of Jewish sources or Biblical editions appears in the volume. Throughout the work there is a much more abrasive tone in the language indicated most readily in the noted anti-Jewish statements in the early pages on the Massorets and the much more profound and persistent anti-Vossian polemic sustained throughout the CE. The latter is emphasised by the addition of a small work by Simon written against Isaac Vossius’ views on the Sibylline Oracles and the value of the *Septuagint*.⁶⁴ The

⁶² *Lettres Choisies* I, No. 24 (2 November 1682), p. 224.

⁶³ See Lacey, *Dissent*, p. 402, who cites Morrice, January 9th 1686

⁶⁴ On Vossius, see D. Katz, “Isaac Vossius and the English Biblical Critics 1670–1689,” in R. H. Popkin and A. Vanderjagt, eds., *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), pp. 142–84.

anti-Jewish statements, which probably were part of the basic infrastructure of polemic against Vossius, do not fit well with Simon's positive position towards Judaism of the HCVT and CHOT.⁶⁵ There are also other seemingly more minor variations that ultimately change the meaning of the text. Although it may be a reflection of a more sophisticated printing house, CE has Hebrew and Greek script whereas CHOT does not. There are no Latin citations in CE where there are many in CHOT. CE has "Carræans" where CHOT has "Karaites".⁶⁶ Although it is difficult to quantify, while the 1682 issue uses a neutral language of "Editions" and "Copies" to talk about the various manifestations of scripture, the 1684 text substitutes the more aggressive vocabulary of "reading," presumably to emphasize the conventional origins of diversity.

The impression derived from comparing the CHOT with the CE is that the latter is a more aggressive, less subtle, vulgarisation of the former. Far from not wanting to be "an amplifier of Scripture-Variances," the impact of repeated phrasings of words like "reading," "this variety of reading," "differences of reading," "readings of the various copies," and "various readings" leaves the reader in no doubt of the textual intention.⁶⁷ The Masoretic contribution is dismissed as "Deleriums of the feverish Jews": the notion that the Masoretic apparatus could help restore an original text were dismissed out of hand. Again these passages do not fit well either with Simon's original language or, indeed, with the inclusion in CE of passages from CHOT which give a positive account of Karaite Judaism.⁶⁸ Where CHOT had been careful, even handed, and measured, CE was blunt and pointed: "there was an infinite variety of manuscript copies."⁶⁹ Throughout CE, while defending the undoubtedly Simonian point "that the Sacred manuscripts of the Old Testament do not altogether retain that Form, which the most Authentick and original copies represent," the editor mistakenly conflates the

⁶⁵ For some examples of the anti-Vossian passages, see CE, pp. 71–81, pp. 156–68, and p. 179.

⁶⁶ A comparison of CE, p. 29, with CHOT, I, p. 162, shows considerable variation: the CHOT bears a closer relationship to the HCVT (see I, p. 139). CE includes marginal references and additions not present in either the French or the English editions.

⁶⁷ CE, pp. 17–21.

⁶⁸ On Carræans or Karraeans, see CE, Chapter 12, pp. 92–7.

⁶⁹ CE, p. 32.

notion of authenticity and originality which Simon had carefully distinguished in the CHOT. Rather inconsistently towards the end of CE passages representing Simon's account of authenticity were correctly copied.⁷⁰ Perhaps the last piece of textual evidence that this is book has a different tonal quality from Simon's original can be found in its attitude towards the London polyglot Bible of Brian Walton. Simon had reviewed the quality of Walton's six volumes at length in CHOT, and although he had subjected it to his typically forensic and rigorous interrogation, his final opinion was that it was a generally meritorious performance: indeed he suggested that he might like to make a new edition of Walton's work (with his own amendments included).⁷¹ The final pages of CE made many critical animadversions on Walton's work finishing on the entirely negative note, "much more might be objected against the English edition which *I omit, since nothing can be absolutely compleat, and perfect.*"⁷²

The CE was a book with a much more radical visage than CHOT: it was aggressive, polemical, and left the reader in no doubt of its purpose in undermining the certainty of Scripture. Although it drew its inspiration from Simon's criticism and, indeed, may have represented Hampden's understanding of Simon's real intentions, it does not have the sophistication and subtlety of CHOT. The most significant point that disables Simon as a candidate as its author is that CE fails to use any material from part three of CHOT. Simon spent the first two books deconstructing the sacred text; in part three he proposed "rules" for more exact understanding and translation of the text. In other words, the first two-thirds of CHOT were destructive, while the final part proposed constructive remedies.

The reception of Simon's work in England in the 1680s and the radicalisation implicit in the translations illustrate how it was possible for contemporaries to appropriate his work transforming Catholic apologia into incipient impiety. Tracing the history of the various English editions and translations of Simon's criticism in the 1680s indicates the groundwork that provided the context for the debates about the status of Scripture in England in the 1690s. The story told here is complex: there is more to be unearthed. Simon's work

⁷⁰ CE, p. 35, Chapter 20, p. 193, follows CHOT fairly accurately.

⁷¹ CHOT, III, Chapters 20–24, pp. 152–82. Simon makes the suggestion of a new edition at p. 182.

⁷² CE, p. 246.

was adapted to counter-orthodox uses in England: such was the perceived threat of this discourse that, by the mid-1690s, defences of Scriptural inspiration in, for example, the Boyle lectures of John Williams and Ofspring Blackall, became vitally important to the orthodox.⁷³ The story of the reception of Simon also allows historians to ponder the relationship between scholarly writings and the more populist attack upon orthodox belief. It is clear that Anglophone culture was capable of using and appropriating the achievements of continental criticism. The careful juxtaposition between contrary orthodox and heterodox readings of Simon's Biblical criticism also provides important evidence for locating the political implications and context for the debates and dynamics of the "republic of letters" in the late seventeenth century.

⁷³ For a further account of this debate, see J. A. I. Champion, "'Acceptable to Inquisitive Men': Some Simonian contexts for Newton's Biblical Criticism, 1680–1692," in *Newton and Religion*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer, forthcoming). The key work is the abridgement of Jean Leclerc's controversy with Simon. This work was attacked by: Claude Lamothe in his *The Inspiration of the New Testament Asserted and Explained* (London, 1694); William Lowth, *A Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the writings of the Old and New Testament* (Oxford, 1692, an enlarged edition was published in 1699); and John Williams who delivered two series of Boyle Lectures in 1695 and 1696 defending the theme of Scriptural inspiration against Leclerc, Spinoza, and Simon.

THE SLUMS OF COSMOPOLIS: A RENAISSANCE IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY?

Brian P. Copenhaver

In his amazing autobiography, when he describes his move in 1963 to UC San Diego in order to found a new department of philosophy, Dick Popkin mentions in passing that he also became the editor of a new journal at that time—the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*.¹ Justly celebrated as stimulus and guiding spirit of cultural, political, intellectual and philosophical conversation on many planes and in many places, Dick has also won fame as founding and abiding genius of that journal for three and a half decades, with more to come. Since it is the leading vehicle in any language for the history of philosophy, his many years of dedication to the *Journal's* growth and improvement deserve abundant thanks here and will long earn the praise of its readers—past, present and future. Dick also recalls in telling his story how his work as editor once caused him to glance at a Polish journal that happened to contain some unpublished Hume letters that happened to end up in Cracow because a Polish aristocrat happened to have bought them in England two hundred years before.² This particular chain of happenings helped Dick dislodge Hume from the sole proprietorship of British empiricism. To the prepared mind, of course, such things are more apt to happen. In gratitude for what Dick has taught so many about preparing the mind—though few minds can aspire to rival his—I offer the following with its own chains of happening across the centuries.

* * *

Scepticism is the incubus of modern philosophy—of philosophy's post-medieval phase, that is to say, since the breach between Anglo-

¹ Richard H. Popkin, "Intellectual Autobiography: Warts and All," in Richard A. Watson and James E. Force, eds., *The Sceptical Mode in Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1988), p. 125.

² Popkin, "Autobiography," p. 133.

American and Continental thought after Husserl and Frege has stalled the growth of a robust philosophical post-modernism, for better or for worse. The sceptical nightmare hatched by renaissance humanists, schooled by Montaigne and fed on Descartes' dreams still haunts philosophies of all kinds. Among Richard Popkin's many contributions to the history of philosophy, the greatest is his account of the origins and original motivations of post-classical scepticism, the early modern revival of a philosophical tradition all but lost in the middle ages. It was Popkin who first showed how and why philosophers and philologists of the renaissance resurrected scepticism, an achievement that puts him among the most eminent scholars and thinkers of our century—Ernst Cassirer, Giovanni Gentile, Eugenio Garin, Paul Kristeller, Charles Schmitt—who wrote the story of renaissance philosophy.³ Despite the work done by Popkin and these other heroes of learning, despite continuing study of the history of scepticism by philosophers, despite even some awareness that philosophy has a history between Occam and Descartes, glaring defects of presentism and whig historiography remain in philosophy's typical treatments of its post-medieval past. As our age challenges or destroys other canons of authority and value, renaissance philosophy is in little such danger—at least from an Anglo-American perspective—never having been admitted to a philosophical canon in the first place.

The warrant for philosophical ignorance of several centuries of philosophy's history was given by Descartes, and given in two senses, the first familiar from the famous words of *The Discourse on the Method*.

Reading good books is like having a conversation with . . . past ages. . . .
 Conversing with . . . past centuries is much the same as traveling. . . .
 But one who spends too much time traveling eventually becomes a stranger in his own country; and one who is too curious about the practices of past ages usually remains quite ignorant about those of the present. Moreover, fables make us imagine many events as possible when they are not, . . . and those who regulate their conduct . . . from these works are liable to fall into the excesses of the knights-errant. . . . That is why, as soon as I was old enough to emerge from the control of my teachers, I entirely abandoned the study of letters. Resolving to seek no knowledge other than that which could be found in myself or else in the great book of the world, I spent the rest of my youth traveling, . . . gathering various experiences. . . . But after I

³ Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 1–86.

had spent some years pursuing these studies in the book of the world, . . . I resolved one day to undertake studies within myself too. . . . In this I have had much more success, I think, than I would have had if I had never left my country or my books.⁴

Neither the Quixotic byways of literature nor the remote paths of history should divert the philosophic pilgrim from the trail of present experience that leads to reason's highways within. "A good man is not required to have read every book," announced Descartes in his *Search for the Truth*. "It would . . . be a kind of defect in his education if he had. . . . He must . . . measure out his time . . . to reserve the better part of it for . . . good actions . . . which his own reason would have to teach him if he learned everything from it alone."⁵ In fact, for the rationalists who emulated Descartes, the audacious prospect of so large a burden on reason alone came to be an ideal rather than a caution.

In one sense Descartes was taking a methodological position when he absolved philosophy *as such* from history and philology *as such*, relegating history to the "simple forms of knowledge which can be acquired without any process of reasoning" and adding that "a good man is not required to learn Greek or Latin any more than the languages of Switzerland or Brittany."⁶ However, since good men of Descartes' class actually were expected to know Latin, if not Greek, this last remark, made in the early seventeenth century, is also a declaration of philosophy's independence from its proximate past—a philosopher's manifesto, in other words, for withdrawal from the historical conditions of the renaissance. So much has the renaissance paled in the memory of Anglo-American philosophy that this second sense of the Cartesian evasion of history (the more daring in its own time) has lost interest for philosophers. One of my crusades is to restore that interest, and my remarks here are part of that campaign, motivated not only by Popkin's example but also by the words of someone closer in time to Descartes, Giambattista Vico:

Philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes knowledge of the true; philology observes that of which human choice is the author, whence comes consciousness of the certain. . . . Among the philologists [are]

⁴ John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, trans., *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985–91), I, 113–16 (AT VI, 5–11).

⁵ Cottingham et al., *Writings of Descartes*, II, 400 (AT X, 495).

⁶ Cottingham et al., *Writings of Descartes*, II, 403 (AT X, 502–3).

all the grammarians, historians [and] critics. . . . The philosophers failed by half in not giving certainty to their reasonings by appeal to the authority of the philologists, and . . . the latter failed by half in not . . . [giving] their authority the sanction of truth by appeal to the reasoning of the philosophers.

Vico knew Descartes very well, for better and for worse, and like Descartes, with the eyes of a knowing neighbor, he could watch early modern philosophy being stripped of its history.⁷

Today, more so than twenty years ago, there is hope that Vico's wish for a philosophy grounded in history and philology may be possible. Alasdair MacIntyre is a contemporary who wants to do philosophy in this way, calling his enterprise "philosophical history" and naming Vico as one of his models.⁸ In fact, a number of thoughtful people have been working in the common ground that philosophy and history ought to have occupied together in the last several centuries. Examples are Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1st ed., 1981), MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988), Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1989), MacIntyre's *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1990), Stephen Toulmin's *Cosmopolis* (1990), Ernest Gellner's *Reason and Culture* (1992), and John Deely's *New Beginnings* (1994).⁹ These books have in common a concern with philosophical modernity as shaped, in one degree or another, by the great Cartesian fracture just described. Hence, directly or indirectly, they take positions on the place of the renaissance in the history of philosophy that ought to interest students of the period. Here I will begin with MacIntyre's contributions to this

⁷ Thomas G. Bergin and Max H. Fisch, trans., *The New Science of Giambattista Vico: Unabridged Translation of the Third Edition (1744) with the Addition of "Practic of the New Science"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 63 (NS i.x.138–40); Isaiah Berlin, "Vico's Concept of Knowledge," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 111–19.

⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (2nd ed.; Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. 3, 265.

⁹ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Ernest Gellner, *Reason and Culture: The Historic Role of Rationality and Rationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); John Deely, *New Beginnings: Early Modern Philosophy and Postmodern Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

reassertion of philosophical history and end with some thoughts stimulated by Toulmin's history of a philosophical cosmopolis.

The purpose of what MacIntyre calls "the Enlightenment project" was to show that moral principles have a rational basis without reference to theology, secular law or anything else outside the sphere of moral reasoning.¹⁰ Although Descartes, Hobbes and their successors had argued for the primacy and independence of rational argument in philosophy, not everyone was persuaded, least of all about moral philosophy. When Diderot made the case for desire and Hume for the passions as the real basis of moral choice, Kant replied with the intricate account of autonomous practical reason that philosophers ever since have found so compelling, either as an invitation to refine his construction of a moral rationalism or as a provocation to disassemble it. Among those who came to trust reason less than Kant or not at all were Kierkegaard, who based his morality on an ideal of choice as something given but not otherwise justified for the human agent, and Nietzsche, who wanted will to replace what he took to be the deceptions of reason. In large measure, MacIntyre accepts Nietzsche's subversive genealogy of morality, but not with the consequences so familiar in the contemporary academy, consequences that MacIntyre abhors. According to MacIntyre, either Nietzsche was right or the Enlightenment project in moral philosophy was misbegotten.

It had been good if that project had not been born, he concludes. Nietzsche's sabotage has its appeal only because the moral machinery of the Enlightenment has been so poor in its product, described by MacIntyre in an apocalyptic vocabulary of disagreement and disorder, an interminable catastrophe of dissent. The besetting error of Enlightenment, he maintains, was the repudiation of Aristotle in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nietzsche prevails only if the anti-Aristotelian origin of the Enlightenment was a good beginning. But it wasn't a good beginning.

Aristotle's conception of the human condition, as of things in general, is teleological and essentialist. People, in so far as they are human, are specifically and naturally so, but their being human has to do with *end* as well as *essence*. The end of being human is a matter of degree, not something fixed and discrete. Hence, moral rules are

¹⁰ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 37–9.

meant to guide people, within specific limits of nature, from a state of being something worse in their humanity toward a state of being something better in this respect. This version of Aristotelian moral theory is pre-Christian and so, from a Christian point of view, either pagan or at least secular. What MacIntyre calls “classical theism,” however, is a Christian Aristotelianism, which takes its *teleological* character from Aristotle’s view that moral agency is movement toward a goal and its *categorical* character from the Christian claim that moral rules are divine commandments or derive from them.¹¹

Although Aquinas and other medieval thinkers maintained that such rules were both revealed in Scripture and proved by reason, MacIntyre notes that Protestant reformers and Jansenist Catholics broke the bond between reason and revelation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the same period during which Cartesian and other critics of Aristotelian orthodoxy removed any talk of ends or essences from philosophy. If the only causality in the post-Cartesian world of reasons and mechanisms is efficient causality, those wishing to account rationally for moral agency—and especially for its intentionality—can no longer appeal to Aristotle’s final causes, the ends in view of which the moral agent acts. If things are just extension, except for those human parcels of extension that happen to be joined to minds, the mind loses its moral bearings. Despite Descartes’ best efforts, the very idea of a rational morality fades in a universe of matter, mind and mind’s reasons. The concept of a unified human nature is no longer available to resolve or even to express the moral predicament of a being whose body makes trouble for its soul—and vice-versa.

Because there are no natures and no essences, human nature, or rather some particular human nature, can’t be thought of as imperfect or perfectible. And because there are no final causes, there’s nothing prospective in the order of causality to shape intention. Causes operate in the post-Cartesian world, but they’re always efficient causes that come from behind, while moral action—indeed, human action—has to consider what’s next, what’s up ahead. In Aristotle’s moral system, virtues guide human nature toward its good. By overlaying their Biblical obligations to divine commandment with Aristotle’s philosophy, Christian Aristotelians made his teleology of

¹¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 52–61.

virtues a teleology of *rules* as well. They had *categorical* reasons of divine injunction as well as *teleological* reasons of the human good for trying to better their humanity, and in Aristotle's philosophy they found a rational framework to join the two kinds of reasons together. Expressed as rules, such reasons were meant to make humans better, not just to report on their behavior or analyze it. But after teleology and divinity had been ruled out of the Enlightenment project, various conceptions of human behavior came to be the positive content and the only available content of moral rule-making. Since the rule-makers were more embedded in history than they knew, the new rules turned out to be broadly the same as the old. Rules derived originally from a belief that human behavior falls short of human nature were now supposed to reflect human behavior taken as a body of facts, as effects of efficient causes, not as a set of mistakes to be corrected, or as a nature not fully realized in relation to its final cause. This is what MacIntyre means by saying that our "moral judgments are linguistic survivals from the practices of classical theism which have lost the context provided by those practices."¹²

Surely Kant's was the supreme effort to construct the sort of moral rationalism that MacIntyre regards as incoherent and as the source of our moral incoherence. MacIntyre notes that Hegel and other critics saw Kant's transcendental philosophy as too abstracted from history, thus stimulating the historicist reaction that MacIntyre himself propagates. But MacIntyre is also well qualified as exponent and critic of the philosophizing which in recent decades has so severely tested the Kantian fundamentals of universality and necessity, analytic and synthetic, *a priori* and *a posteriori*. The outcome of the analytic critique, he believes, is to have confined itself to the analysis of inference, abandoning hope of establishing moral premises of a universal and necessary kind—which was the aim of the Enlightenment project. While from one direction the post-Hegelian reaction wants to recover the history banished from post-Cartesian philosophy, from the other direction the analytic reaction—explicitly in the earlier part of the century, in more recent times implicitly—detaches philosophy from moral inquiry by reducing moral utterance to the expression of emotion, or at least to something non-rational and therefore not addressed or not well addressed by philosophy.

¹² MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 60.

Implicitly or explicitly, according to MacIntyre, contemporary philosophy has taken emotivism as a fair account of any moral discourse rich enough to justify the countless concrete distinctions of right and wrong that inform daily life. Whatever moral discourse may be—on this view—either it isn't philosophy or else it isn't very productive as moral philosophy because its rational rigor dwindles as its moral specificity grows. MacIntyre focuses this indictment historically, turning it away from moral inquiry in general and toward the moral discourse allowed by post-Enlightenment philosophy. Moral reasoning lost its coherence when philosophy abandoned essential natures, final causes and rationally grounded divine laws while nonetheless striving to discover a rational foundation for moral rules that had been shaped by a previous commitment to such natures, causes and laws. Emotivism, which Ayer and others expressed as their philosophical insight into a universal defect of moral inquiry as such, MacIntyre takes as a philosophical-cum-sociological diagnosis of a particular historical failure—our failure as heirs of Descartes and Kant. Our moral language is gibberish because we go on *using* moral terms whose *meaning* needs a vanished context of teleology, essence and divine law grounded in reason. Given its dislocation from *meaning*, to call our *use* of moral language “emotivist” becomes fair enough, just what one would expect, says MacIntyre, if the Enlightenment project had failed. MacIntyre hears modern moral discourse as a noise in the street. “Within modern philosophy,” he complains, “it is not too much to speak of rival conceptions of rationality, both theoretical and practical.”¹³ This is the philosopher's anthropological nightmare; to evoke it is very harsh.

Despite MacIntyre's severe criticisms of philosophy's past and present, his aims are constructive, particularly with regard to the future of rational moral discourse. A different view of the future he opposes as projecting a falsely unified history of philosophical progress from Socrates to the present: locating it in the Scottish Enlightenment and its North American sequel, he gives a graphic picture of this progressivism as proclaimed in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, begun in Edinburgh in 1873. If the past was prelude to a brilliant present and a brighter future for the group that he calls “encyclopeditists,” for those he calls “genealogists”—Nietzsche and his

¹³ MacIntyre, *Rival Versions*, pp. 8, 13.

followers—the past as known was a dark hoax perpetrated by those whose interests might be promoted by an expedient history.¹⁴ Both genealogists and encyclopedists saw philosophy's history as continuous, either as continued progress or as continued prevarication. MacIntyre presents his history of philosophy, however, as discontinuous, marked by a great breach, before and after the rejection of Aristotle. In fact, one might see MacIntyre's history of philosophy as progressive up to a certain time, then shifting to a genealogy of self-deception after that moment. Where MacIntyre puts the breach says a great deal about his conception of the history of philosophy.

There is no doubt, in any case, that MacIntyre regards the history of philosophy as a necessary and valuable undertaking and history in general as indispensable to fixing the faults that he finds in contemporary thought and action. "The only adequate true story," he argues, will tell us

... what it is for a set of ... rules and practices to have been fragmented and thrown into disorder and enable us to understand the historical transition by which the latter state [of disorder] emerged from [a] ... former [state of good order]. Only the writing of a certain kind of history will supply what we need.¹⁵

The history that he has in mind he calls "philosophical history," naming Collingwood, Hegel and Vico as predecessors.¹⁶ Unlike the academic history of the modern university, which MacIntyre treats as a symptom of moral disorder, philosophical history will cure the disease. To correct the historian's lapses, it will attend more to questions of theory and philosophy. And to reform the philosopher's errors, it will reverse the repudiation of history that became part of philosophy's charter with Descartes, acknowledging especially that universality and timelessness are illusions in moral inquiry. Moral inquiry, whether philosophical or not, must take up the momentary particulars of history because without them there is nothing moral to inquire about. MacIntyre's history will not be universal or timeless, nor will it have the certainty of deductive inference. It will be a provisional history, the best one can have at the time, but philosophically it will be powerful. "I hold not only that historical enquiry is required," asserts MacIntyre, "but also that it is in its historical

¹⁴ MacIntyre, *Rival Versions*, pp. 9–57.

¹⁵ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 113.

¹⁶ Above, n. 8.

encounter that any given point of view establishes or fails to establish its rational superiority.”¹⁷ Descartes removed history from philosophy in order to perfect its rationalization, but MacIntyre claims that philosophy cannot be effective *as a rational procedure* unless it reclaims its partnership with history.

Like other critics of philosophical modernity, MacIntyre strenuously opposes the Cartesian secession from history, but he locates a prior error in an earlier period. Briefly, he represents philosophy from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle through Aquinas as a self-improving *tradition* capable of a constructive dialogue with a past conceived in genuinely historical terms. Acknowledging that Aristotle’s historical understanding was small, he claims nonetheless that awareness of Biblical history eventually enabled Christian Aristotelians to historicize their philosophy as well. The success of Aquinas in adapting his Augustinian heritage to an emergent Aristotelianism is MacIntyre’s fullest example of tradition working in medieval philosophy, which he credits with having achieved historical consciousness. “The medieval vision is historical in a way that Aristotle’s could not be,” he maintains. “It situates our aiming at the good not just in specific contexts—Aristotle situates that aiming within the *polis*—but in contexts which themselves have a history.” Although MacIntyre recognizes criticisms of “the weakness and inadequacy of medieval historiography,” he gives them little attention, and he gives even less to the complementary claim that students of the renaissance would make about the historiographical achievement of their own period.¹⁸

Why does MacIntyre credit the renaissance so little for the historicizing of philosophy and moral inquiry? For two reasons, I think. First, despite his rich knowledge of the past and his brilliant writing of history, he comes from a historiography—the Anglo-American history of philosophy—which has behaved as if philosophy had simply ceased between Occam and Descartes. Second, his original views about periodization permit (or perhaps require) the usual philosophical void, though he would put it between Scotus and Suárez. MacIntyre makes Suárez complicit in the same amnesiac modernism that Descartes advertised so famously. As theologian the great Jesuit respected tradition, but as philosopher he succumbed as much to

¹⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 269; *Whose Justice?* p. 9.

¹⁸ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 176.

timeless rationalism as Descartes would after he recovered from La Flèche and its Jesuits. MacIntyre puts Suárez near the end of a decadence that Scotus began and Meister Eckhart made worse. Scotus, by raising powerful objections to Thomist positions on will, knowledge and the relation of philosophy to theology, caused philosophy to turn inward on its own preoccupations as a nascent profession, just as the evolving university encouraged philosophy, atomized and isolated, to become an institution. A little later, while still calling himself a Thomist, Meister Eckhart severed the work of preaching from any theology that made claims on reason and thence on philosophy. From MacIntyre's perspective, then, the damage was done long before Descartes, since philosophy had long since lost its links with tradition and theology with reason.

Under these conditions, MacIntyre asks "in what did fourteenth- and fifteenth century medieval moral philosophy and metaphysics issue? The answer is: as a whole, nothing."¹⁹ He locates this philosophical vacuum in the later medieval university as it grew larger, more stable institutionally but intellectually less coherent. While recognizing that until recently most philosophers of great stature did not teach in universities, he does not look outside the universities of this period and hence misses the major figures—mostly Italian—who transformed philosophy in the renaissance. When someone with MacIntyre's historical resources propagates this standard oversight of the textbooks, it must be discouraging to those who know the philosophical achievement of the time between Scotus and Suárez to have been much more, as a whole, than nothing. Did Ficino and Bruno do nothing in metaphysics? Did Pico, Machiavelli and Montaigne do nothing in moral philosophy? Did Valla have nothing valuable to say about philosophy's relation to morality, theology and preaching? The usual, historically starved refrain answers these questions only by reasserting the framework of Anglo-American historiography. But MacIntyre takes that framework to be a symptom of the sickness that he wants to cure. Why let the illness spread?

Recall that according to MacIntyre the "hyerrationalism" of Scotist philosophy found its complement in the "irrationalism" of Meister Eckhart's preaching. Withdrawing into the university and passing the fragments of tradition under the minute scrutiny of reason, the

¹⁹ MacIntyre, *Rival Versions*, pp. 157–8.

philosopher made rational discourse inaccessible to a wider public and gave people cause to think that Eckhart was right to preach in “speech unconstrained by logic, by . . . rational theory and practice,” carrying “language to the point at which conceptualization is evaded because sense is violated.” At the twentieth century terminus of philosophy, MacIntyre discovers in Heidegger an anti-Thomist “akin to Eckhart, a kinship fully and gladly acknowledged by Heidegger.” Earlier, as the story passes through the fourteenth century, Petrarch makes a briefer appearance when “moral philosophy acquired a new rival, in the form of the revived classical rhetoric.” For MacIntyre, the oratorical consciousness promoted by Petrarch’s admiration for Cicero is another cause of “the divorce between rhetorical effectiveness and rational argumentation.”²⁰

Because he mentions them briefly or not at all, I don’t know how important MacIntyre would find it that Valla, Pico, Vives, Erasmus, Agricola, Ramus and other renaissance thinkers understood the relation between reason and rhetoric as a difficult issue worthy of serious philosophical attention; in any case “those who place effectiveness in persuasion above rationality of argument” is too simple a phrase to describe their views on a topic central to his critique of philosophy’s reclusive rationalism. Likewise, when he reviews contested claims for demonstration, dialectic and rhetoric in the period before the Scottish Enlightenment, it misses the point to bypass Ramus on the grounds that “quite early in the seventeenth century the influence of Ramus had become negligible.”²¹ The picture of “influence” here has been drawn by conventional Anglo-American historiography. From this perspective, Ramus and other renaissance philosophers look less and less interesting as the standard account moves (progresses?) from Descartes to Hobbes, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume and so on. Leibniz was the last of the canonical figures who remembered renaissance philosophy at all. Aggravating the oblivious effects of a narrative that has always sidestepped the renaissance, oddly enough, is the original story that MacIntyre tells. In the end, his obligations to Aristotle and Aquinas make it hard on any historiography that doesn’t rise and fall with the fortunes of these two great thinkers. He distances himself explicitly from the renaissance phase of Thomism as it culminated in Suárez and incited Descartes, but

²⁰ MacIntyre, *Rival Versions*, pp. 155–6, 164–9.

²¹ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* pp. 224–5.

he takes little notice of the larger context of renaissance Aristotelianism in which Suárez worked and against which Descartes aimed his advertisements for himself. Situating Aristotle on a still larger stage, MacIntyre claims that “when eighteen or nineteen hundred years after Aristotle the modern world came systematically to repudiate the classical view of human nature, . . . it did repudiate it very precisely as Aristotelianism.”²² In fact, it has taken some time and trouble for scholars of Popkin’s generation to establish Aristotle’s enduring primacy in renaissance philosophy. These same scholars understand that MacIntyre’s view of Aristotle’s repudiation needs revising: i.e., that the Aristotle exiled from post-Cartesian philosophy was banished in his classicized, post-medieval guise, having reached a prominent place on the monument of erudition erected by renaissance philology and then vacated when Descartes decided to rebuild philosophy’s house.²³

For students of early modern thought, these two great moments—the emergence in the renaissance of modern classicism and then the excision of classicism from philosophy by Descartes—have always had the status of problems, problems in the sense of large and obvious occasions for inquiry. At least they were obvious to me until a few years ago when I taught an honors course about renaissance culture and first *realized* that even the brightest students might just not care very much about ideas—past ideas—about which I care deeply. I’ve always *known* this to be true in the way that I know grass is green, but until I taught this course, I never *realized* it. Then, a little later, I taught another course about seventeenth century philosophy to philosophy majors, who gave me an even bigger surprise. They wanted me to *justify* my talking about Descartes, a need that had never occurred to me. In my little patch of historical turf, Descartes is just there, in the way that grass is green. Or is he? Or was he?

Moved by my epiphany about renaissance culture as alien-nation, and struck by the title of Toulmin’s *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of*

²² MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 165.

²³ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* pp. 207–9, briefly recognizes Charles Schmitt’s pioneering work on renaissance Aristotelianism but not the earlier contributions of Eugenio Garin, Paul Kristeller and others. For bibliography on this issue, see Schmitt et al., *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Copenhaver and Schmitt, *A History of Western Philosophy: Vol. 3, Renaissance Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Modernity, I assigned this engaging book to my students and myself. Toulmin wants to revise an old story about the seventeenth century, which said that Modernity began in that era when Philosophy and Science acquired new theoretical dispositions. Like MacIntyre, Toulmin deplores as morally unstrung the condition toward which things have since evolved. He presents the old story as a tale of progress, but a false tale. His teachers had told him that seventeenth century rationality was a good thing *because* it privileged theory over practice, the general over the particular, the abstract over the concrete, logic over rhetoric, permanence over change, and mind and reason over affect and body. All this was depicted as a noble quest for certainty, Toulmin complains, when actually it was a flight from doubt and ambiguity. In an age of fierce religious conflict, competing certainties were the hot engine of discord. One Christian's creed was another's crime. Since certainty seemed safer the more one departed from the human condition, seventeenth century thinkers abandoned the concrete particulars of history, decontextualizing their search for an abstract and general science of nature constructed ahistorically. In his *First Anniversary* John Donne heard the rumblings of the new natural philosophies as a storm building to wreck a coherent Cosmopolis, where the natural *cosmos* and the human *polis* were aspects of the same well-integrated world. While the new philosophy—abstract, ahistorical and theory-driven—aggravated the changes that Donne deplored, philosophers who shared Donne's horror of uncertainty reassured themselves by attacking scepticism and starting their Quest for Certainty, which Toulmin, citing Dewey and Rorty, regards as a long chase up a blind alley. Terrified by the religious slaughter that started again in 1618, the new rationalists were moved more by fear of doubt than by love of truth. In order to diminish ambiguity in a time of savage intolerance, they started the long-running hostilities between Science and the Humanities, finally neglecting the latter because they thought they could be sure only about the former.

A story that begins in the spiritual panic of the Thirty Years War and ends with Logical Positivism can't be about progress, but Toulmin still wants an edifying, progressive history; he wants to "reappropriate the wisdom of the sixteenth-century humanists, . . . [their] practical concern for life in its concrete detail."²⁴ So he moves the first

²⁴ Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, p. xi.

chapter of his new story from the age of Descartes and the scientific revolution back to Montaigne and renaissance humanism. He praises the Montaigne of the *Apology* for his scepticism, finding it tolerant and humane, and he associates Montaigne with other thinkers, especially Erasmus, Rabelais and Shakespeare, whom he admires and calls "humanists."²⁵ Toulmin wants to reappropriate renaissance wisdom because of the historicist, sceptical and humanist values that he finds in it, but he understands these elements of renaissance wisdom from a Modern point of view whose instincts are relativist and whose assumptions are secular. Historicism, scepticism and humanism may seem progressive and liberating to some as the millennium slouches to its end, but fewer would admire the renaissance originals. If Donne mourned the decay of a Cosmopolis, it was not a benign City of Man ready for occupation by the Progressive Citizen. The Cosmopolis of the renaissance had its slums as well as its palaces; closed temples bordered its open squares. The mean streets and low-rent districts of Cosmopolis are conspicuous in its philosophical topography, but so is an older neighborhood and its genteel residents, the classics.

Pyrrhus, Flamininus, Philip, Publius Sulpicius Galba, Plato, Solon, Aristotle, Lycurgus, Chrysippus, Zeno, Caesar, Leonidas, Ischolas, Leah, Rachel, Sarah, Jacob, Livia, Augustus, Stratonice, Deoitarius: these are most of the two-dozen proper names of persons that occur in the nine pages of Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals," surely the essay most read in our time, after the "Apology for Raymond Sebond." The people whom we remember best from this short work, however, go unnamed, the three Native Americans—simply "trois d'entre eux"—whom Montaigne met at the court of Charles IX in 1562. Except the king, the only contemporary with a name is Durand de Villegagnon, who sailed to Brazil in 1557, accompanied by the unnamed informant from whom Montaigne took most of the ethnography in the essay. Montaigne says that he knew this "crude and simple fellow" for a long time and that he preferred his stories to the tales told by

sophisticated people who know more and understand things more subtly but add their own glosses . . . , altering the story a little. . . . One needs either a trustworthy person or one so simple that he has

²⁵ Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, p. 43.

nothing to build on in making false inventions seem likely. That was my man, . . . and I'm satisfied with his information without asking what the cosmographers say on the subject.²⁶

Despite this display of bluff empiricism, straight from the shoulder of his rugged but nameless source, Montaigne had already given some long paragraphs to the imaginative cosmographies of Plato and Aristotle, both well labeled. Yet he left his better witness anonymous because his name carried no authority for readers who would recognize the long line of ancient notables who parade through the essay. The same readers, without being told, also knew the names of other authorities whom Montaigne did not even need to mention because their presence was so familiar: Plutarch, Vergil, Horace, Propertius, Seneca, Juvenal, Claudian, Cicero, Herodotus and others. So much deliberate deference to sources of authority so narrowly drawn is the most paradoxical feature of an essay that stands as a charter of cultural relativism.

Classicism, which was the liveliest expression of historicism in the renaissance, begins with deference to ancient authority in general, then to some one ancient authority, then to a second, a third and so on until, inevitably, authorities conflict. One reaction in the renaissance to this discord was an extreme and narrow dogmatism that settled on just one authority as absolutely paramount, as in the Ciceronianism of the sixteenth century that limited good Latin usage to Cicero's lexicon and syntax. Another response was an indiscriminating and passive antiquarianism that found one position as useful as its competitor as long as both were very old, as in some of the moral philosophy of the fifteenth century. A third was deliberate and eirenic concordism, the drive to find the *unum e pluribus*, as in the elder Pico, who wanted to harmonize Plato and Aristotle, Averroes and Avicenna, Scotus and Thomas after having "roamed through all the masters of philosophy, examined every record, and come to know all the schools."²⁷

A fourth reaction to doctrines in conflict was to treat them as dogmas equally in doubt, the scepticism that took its affable form in Montaigne. As the foe of dogmatic philosophy (and thus a hero of progressive history), he maintained that all inquiry ends with the inquirer saying either that

²⁶ Montaigne, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), pp. 99, 103.

²⁷ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Pordenone: Edizioni Studio Tesi, 1994), p. 50.

he has found it, or it can't be found, or he is still searching for it. All philosophy is divided into these three kinds. . . . Peripatetics, Epicureans, Stoics and others thought they had found it . . . and had established the knowledge we have . . . as certain. . . . The Academics despaired of their search. . . . Pyrrho and other Sceptics . . . say that they are still looking for the truth.²⁸

As a Christian in the century that invented the Index, Montaigne had the courage to suspend judgment and keep his questions open, so he recommended the Pyrrhonist option. His handsome bravery makes it easy to ignore the aim of his scepticism, though he explains it clearly:

We're better off . . . not investigating the order of the universe. A soul that's proof against prejudice has come a long way toward tranquility. . . . Compared to those teacherly types who scan for causes human and divine, how much more docile and easily led, both by religious and by political laws, are simple minds without curiosity. No human discovery is more credible or useful. It shows man naked and empty, acknowledging his natural weakness, ready to receive from on high some alien power, deprived of human knowledge, and all the more fit to house the divine, annihilating his judgment to make a larger place for faith . . . , humble, obedient, teachable, earnest, . . . a blank sheet ready to take from God's finger whatever figures it pleases Him to inscribe there.²⁹

The dogmatism that Montaigne wanted to eliminate was the natural product of human reason, which was undependable just because it was human, the spawn of fallen Adam. Purged of unreliable philosophy and then filled with God's grace, the mind is a vessel of docility, but not of tolerance. His soul emptied of inconstant human wisdom, the Christian Pyrrhonist "neither stops believing nor proposes any dogma against the common observances, . . . [being] a sworn enemy of heresy and hence immune to the vain and irreligious notions introduced by the false sects."³⁰ When Vatican officials detected views in his essay "On Prayers" that seemed like those of "false sects," Montaigne added an introductory paragraph that explains how he reconciled his essaying with his believing:

I set down fantasies shapeless and unresolved, like those who publish doubtful questions for debate in the schools, not to establish the truth but to search it out, and I submit them to the judgment of those to

²⁸ Montaigne, *Oeuvres*, p. 208.

²⁹ Montaigne, *Oeuvres*, p. 210; Popkin, *Scepticism*, p. 47.

³⁰ Montaigne, *Oeuvres*, p. 210.

whom it belongs to regulate not only my actions and my writings but also my thoughts, . . . holding it detestable if in ignorance or by oversight I am found to have said anything against the holy teachings of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, in which I am dying and in which I was born.³¹

Montaigne's public profession of faith accords with his religious and political behavior. By the standards of his own day he was conservative (most radicals were even less tolerant)—except in the form of his art, whose fluidity, intricacy and ceaseless accretion have allowed his readers (myself included) to find in the *Essays* the author they want to find. Nonetheless, admirers of Montaigne's scepticism might consider its aims and uses before confusing it with tolerance of a more amiable and Modern kind.

That post-classical scepticism first emerged from a desire to protect religious belief against philosophical inquiry is evident in Montaigne and even clearer in the renaissance sceptics who preceded him, especially Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola. Like his famous uncle, Gianfrancesco was an original thinker, but he took his lead from Giovanni Pico's later years, when the young Prince of Concord had grown close to Girolamo Savonarola, the weeping friar. The elder Pico was perhaps chastened by controversies that erupted after he offered to defend nine hundred theses in Rome in 1486 at the age of twenty-three. His classicism was hypertrophic, as the theses show, yet he was determined to make music out of the vast cacophony of ancient wisdom. "Who does not know," he asked,

that I could have extended just one thesis of the nine hundred, the one . . . that reconciles the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, . . . into six hundred or even more headings by methodically listing . . . all those topics about which others believe that those philosophers disagree and I claim that they agree?

Although he feared that critics would "take offense at the great number of my propositions," the Church at first condemned or questioned only thirteen of them.³² Christian thinkers, having produced such literary forms as concords of discordant canons, books of sentences and disputed questions, had long accepted that intellectual progress could come from contested authority. But the renaissance

³¹ Montaigne, *Oeuvres*, p. 138.

³² Pico, *Oratio*, pp. 48, 80.

revival of the ancient philosophical schools put new strains on this convention. Since the twelfth century, the medieval synthesis of faith and reason had tried to meet philosophical as well as theological standards, but the philosophical norms were predominantly Aristotelian. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as Christians learned more about Platonists, Stoics, Epicureans and other ancient philosophers, the burden of integration grew heavier, and Pico's nine-hundred theses sag with the weight of this philosophical efflorescence. Pico wished to harmonize not only Peripatetics and Platonists but also Pythagoreans, Chaldaeans, Hermetists, Cabalists and other exotic sages.

During Pico's lifetime, raw material for the revival of ancient wisdom accumulated in new Italian libraries, including the private collection of the Medici in Florence. When the family was banished in 1494, their palace was sacked and more than a thousand books were moved to the Dominican convent of San Marco, of which Savonarola had become prior and which had extensive holdings of its own. So it happened that by the time the elder Pico died in 1494, San Marco housed five Greek manuscripts of Sextus Empiricus, the major records of ancient Scepticism lost to the Middle Ages. Sextus did not attract the Dominicans because they were in a tolerant frame of mind. Savonarola wanted Sextus translated to show that sacred knowledge revealed through God's prophets should displace the profane knowledge shown by the Sceptics to be dubious even in philosophical terms. Directly or indirectly, Savonarola's interest in Sextus culminated in the younger Pico's work of 1514, *The Weighing of Empty Pagan Learning against True Christian Teaching*, whose title captures the ferocity of Christian scepticism before Montaigne.³³

Earlier renaissance sceptics extolled revealed wisdom by reviling natural wisdom, glorifying faith by shaming reason. They did not prescribe doubt as a philosophical method (like Descartes) or a moral therapy (like Montaigne); they used doubt as a blunt weapon against any knowledge whose basis was human rather than divine. Christian apologists had long used this tactic, despising philosophy as the seedbed of heresy, and among the types of philosophy they scorned was Scepticism itself. Now, approaching the year 2000, an ordinary dictionary will tell you that a sceptic is "a person disposed

³³ Popkin, "Prophecy and Scepticism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century," *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 4 (1996), pp. 1-5.

to scepticism, especially regarding religion or religious principles.” The word has gained this sense over the past five centuries because of two developments unknown to the first Christian sceptics: first, religious polemics sparked by the Reformation turned the sceptical arguments *away* from philosophy-in-general and *toward* some particular opposing religion; next, La Peyrère, Hobbes, Spinoza and other seventeenth-century critics notoriously and systematically doubted or denied what the Bible claimed to be true. The first modern sceptics had no wish to attack the Bible or any form of Christianity. Philosophy was their target because it honored profane knowledge. But if the friars of San Marco were actually reading manuscripts of the pagan Sextus in the late fifteenth century, they had found sharp implements of doubt unused for more than a millennium.

What made these copies of Sextus accessible again was humanism, the same movement of cultural reclamation that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries restored to Europe the works of Pindar and Pomponius Mela, of Sophocles and Vibius Sequester, of Callimachus and Censorinus. Pindar, Sophocles, Callimachus and the labors of the scholars who resurrected them may stir those who record the great movements of the human spirit, while Censorinus’ treatise *On the Birthday*, Vibius Sequester *On Rivers*, and the *Geography* of Pomponius Mela pass unregistered in the grand annals of progress, along with the efforts of their restorers. Or not quite. These minor and derivative texts, unloved except by the philologist, survive along with some sermons, a play attributed to Plautus and epitomes of Augustine and Valerius Maximus in a ninth century manuscript owned by Heiric of Auxerre. Heiric was the student of Lupus of Ferrières, the greatest of the Carolingian classicists, who had studied with Hrabanus Maurus, who had studied with Alcuin; Heiric then taught Remigius of Auxerre and other later scholars. Heiric may have first acquired his grab-bag of texts from his master Lupus in a sixth century manuscript written in Ravenna, and Lupus may have picked it up from an Irishman. This Irish scholar, encountering Mela’s description of his countrymen as “more ignorant of all virtue than any other people,” entered a patriotic objection: “they do know *something* about it, up to a point.” But by the time Heiric saw the manuscript, the Irish gloss had become part of the text from which all future copies descended, thus making grist for the gloss-crushing mills of the Quattrocento humanists. Heiric’s manuscript ended up in Orléans in the tenth century, where it attracted some notice from medieval readers and traveled to Italy by the fifteenth

century. Meanwhile, scribes in Orléans made copies of Heiric's manuscript or parts of it, one of which was the ancestor of a twelfth-century Pomponius Mela owned by the Convent of San Marco. Another copy came to Petrarch in 1335. From this text or another owned by Petrarch derived all the Italian copies made during the renaissance and, hence, such printed versions as the *editio princeps* of Mela produced in Milan in 1471. The pedigree of these codices has been traced by modern students of humanism.³⁴

Why tell this story here? Because it is a story about *humanists* as that term applies, for better and for worse, to the renaissance, to the time of its first use. The recovery of Sextus Empiricus, celebrated bane of philosophers, and the restoration of Pomponius Mela, unsung scourge of the Irish, were both and equally accomplishments of humanism. The Dominicans of San Marco had an important manuscript of Mela, just as they owned rare manuscripts of Sextus. On both counts, these rabidly intolerant hounds of the Lord helped propagate the movement we call renaissance humanism. If we love the renaissance for the sake of Sextus, we should at least like it for Mela, but we are apt to forget what renaissance humanism meant because the term *humanism* so easily becomes vacuous or anachronistic or both. There was a type of humanism, as yet unnamed, taught by Protagoras twenty-five centuries ago. Another species of humanism, called by that name and often modified by the adjective *secular*, is familiar to readers of yesterday's newspapers. Conceptually and causally these two kinds of humanism have more to do with one another than either has to do with renaissance humanism, which was a curricular program and a method of inquiry devoted to classical antiquity but without specific attachment to any of the ancient philosophical positions that it worked to revive. In this sense, only one of the four renaissance figures whom Toulmin most admires was a humanist—Erasmus. Other humanists of the first rank—one thinks of Poggio, Filelfo, Valla, Trapezuntius, Poliziano, Justus Lipsius—would be poor candidates for a list like Toulmin's because they acted or thought in ways that disappoint Modern expectations of humanism. Montaigne was neither a pedagogue nor a professional scholar; so he was not a humanist in the sense that the term applies to

³⁴ L. D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 290–2; Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (3rd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 105.

Poggio or Erasmus. But he thrived on their humanism, without which he could not have known Sextus—without which the procession of old Greeks and Romans in his astounding essay on New World people would have been much shorter.

Earlier I mentioned Toulmin's wish to "reappropriate the wisdom of the sixteenth-century humanists, . . . [their] practical concern for life in its concrete detail," and I explained his discomfort with the abstracted and decontextualized program of post-Cartesian philosophy.³⁵ If the decontextualization of philosophy was a bad thing, contextualization was a good thing, and this was the work of the renaissance when it immersed philosophy in history and philology. But what were the contexts that humanists sought to establish in the renaissance? In the main, they were classical and biblical. For the renaissance and since the Fathers, however, the Bible and the Classics made each other problematic. Erasmus inherited Jerome's anxiety about classicism, a tension that seems healthy from an Enlightenment perspective because its results were secular. But after the Enlightenment the polarity shifted from Classical/Biblical to Classical/Non-Classical, or, as the ancients cruelly put it, Greek/Barbarian. The secular scriptures of the Classics first desanctified the Bible by requiring a critical philology; at the same time they consecrated a new vernacular culture by making a profane space for it and offering it the grail of emulation. But the vernacular culture that reached past the precincts of antiquity eventually passed beyond Europe as well, still desiring, like Montaigne, to situate the other in its own moral framework. In time, historicism and morality became more ecumenical, but the renaissance versions had the defects of their classical and biblical virtues, and some vices as well.

The profane history of ancient Greece and Rome, exhumed by Petrarch and his humanist heirs, gave Montaigne a seductive secular voice, but it gave the same powers of persuasion to Machiavelli, a Florentine statesman who took his lessons from the ancient Romans, from recent events in Italy and from his own political experience. Transposed to France and Bordeaux, Montaigne's formation was roughly the same. Neither Montaigne nor Machiavelli was a humanist, but both depended so much on classical history that neither can be understood without the Greek and Latin texts that underlie their

³⁵ Above, n. 24.

vernacular masterworks. Montaigne's classicism, mitigated by a customary Christianity, seems temperate to us. His is the kindly face of a new profane culture. Machiavelli shows us a harder face and gives the profane its demonic voice. Machiavelli and Montaigne both authorize the secular, but in ways that a Modern or a post-Modern observer ought to be able to tell apart. This distinction, with others I have mentioned today, argues that what we credit to the renaissance needs to be understood in terms intelligible to our time but also fair to its own time.

In the renaissance Toulmin sees a benign secular humanism that might have set us on a happier philosophical path had Descartes not detoured into unhistorical ignorance. But Toulmin's vision of a humane cosmopolis in pre-Cartesian thought needs adjustment, especially in its too generous apprehension of the motives and uses of scepticism and classicism. Mainly ignoring the renaissance, MacIntyre's version of the Cartesian catastrophe makes it out to be the disavowal of a degenerate Christian Aristotelianism, missing the point that the Aristotle known to Descartes and his Jesuit teachers had been reclassified and thereby made vulnerable in the contest of competing antiquities—Platonist, Stoic, Epicurean, Neoplatonist, Peripatetic and, most threatening of all, Sceptical. In urging these philosophers who have taken history so seriously to take more of it even more seriously, I hope not to be churlish. MacIntyre's work and Toulmin's will reward attention from any student of the renaissance—indeed, from any historian—however well informed. Moreover, and despite my objections, MacIntyre's project of philosophical history ought surely to arouse the curiosity of philosophers about the past of their calling, and in that respect alone his work is a tonic for philosophy and the history of philosophy. In the special case of renaissance philosophy, MacIntyre's analysis—like those of Rorty, Taylor and others whose stories turn so much on the notion of a great Cartesian divide—ought to excite any of us, either historians or philosophers or both, to debate these new understandings and misunderstandings of philosophy's development during the unvisited centuries between Scotus and Suárez, between Occam and Descartes.

* * *

E. M. Forster once said that he would rather take his laws from Erasmus or Montaigne than from Moses or St. Paul. He seems to

have understood those apparently amiable renaissance Christians in a gentler way than their religious rigorism could have allowed. Unlike Forster, they could not really “hate the idea of causes.” Although both were prophets of tolerance by the standards of their times, the times were very different from ours. One’s faith was still a cause good enough to die for—and for others of other faiths to die for. That both these thinkers and others in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries encouraged a scepticism whose main motivation was religious is one—but only one—of the revolutionary historical insights which have made all citizens of the republic of letters Dick Popkin’s debtors. Another famous statement of Forster’s—writing as a novelist rather than a social critic—speaks eloquently to the welcoming, persistent and passionate spirit of inquiry that has led Dick by so many paths to so many discoveries. In *Howard’s End*, Forster wrote:

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its highest.

Dick’s sermon, of course, isn’t a sermon. It’s a huge and magnificent body of history and philosophy. One thing it tells us as historians, philosophers, thinkers and scholars is “Only connect!” If we learn to connect as he has, the work will surely be exalted.

ALLISON P. COUDERT

Conferring with Dick Popkin

As one of the proud members of Jim Force's Popkinettes, I can truly say that I owe the rescue of my intellectual career to Richard Popkin. Buried in obscurity in the snows of Western New York State, I had the good fortune to come into contact with Dick and experience, first hand, his intellectual mentorship, which literally changed my life. Instead of being stuck in "Yenemsveldt," Dick ushered me into the intellectual warmth of his conferences, contacts, and critical thinking. It was largely due to his influence that I was able to migrate westward, marry, obtain dogs, a swimming pool, and a decent job. My husband, Gordon Weiner, was also drawn into the Popkinesque whirlpool. Gordon now gives regular reports to Dick on his travels to "occupied Palestine." I became so imbued with Dick's ability to discover unforeseen connections between individuals, events, and ideas that, while teaching at a summer program in Florence in 1989 "Mary Poppins" inadvertently became "Mary Popkins."

Dick's seventieth birthday was celebrated, in part, in Dublin in 1994 in conjunction with the first Popkin Seminar in Intellectual History at Archbishop Marsh's Library. At the dinner in Dick's honor which my husband and I hosted, Gordon sang—in his lilting tenor—the following tribute to Dick:

To the Tune of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling."

*Richard Henry Popkin was and is the only one
To use Marrano intellect as an intellectual gun.
He trained it on the Christians,
He aimed it at the Jews,
And when he shot this canon, folks,
It led to Enlightenment views.*

*Sure, Marcuse and Angie Davis
Were the crosses he had to bear.
But even Philip Roth finally acknowledged he was there.*

*From Kennedy to La Peyère
And even to Balfour
He's shown a hidden presence
That we never knew before.*

*So, let us lift our glasses,
Before he hits the door,
To Richard Henry Popkin,
Yes, to Richard Henry Popkin
The Scholar's true mentor.*

The first conference organized by Dick which I had the good fortune to attend in 1987—at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, U.C.L.A.—was devoted to the subject of “Latitudinarianism, Religion, and Society 1640–1700.” After that came “The Changing Shapes of Knowledge”—at the Warburg Institute, London (1989); “Jewish-Christians and Christian Jews in Early Modern Europe”—at the Clark in L.A. (1992); “Seventeenth-Century Latin Judaica and Biblical Criticism”—Archbishop Marsh’s Library, Dublin (1994); “Leibniz, Mysticism, and Religion”—at the Clark (1995); and “Newton and Religion”—at the Clark in L.A. yet again (1996).

Dick has a unique ability to preside over serious conferences on scholarly subjects with a light and witty hand. Attending an academic conference is, too often, an ordeal. But conference-going, Popkin style, is a privilege and pleasure.

JOHN LOCKE AND FRANCIS MERCURY VAN HELMONT

Allison P. Coudert

What could John Locke (1632–1704), the alleged champion of reason and most famous exponent of British empiricism,¹ possibly have to say to Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–98), an alchemist, Kabbalist, and Quaker? The answer is, a great deal.

Van Helmont figures prominently in Locke's correspondence; but as in the case of van Helmont's association with Leibniz this has been entirely overlooked. How can one explain this friendship between men usually seen as belonging on opposite ends of the philosophical and scientific spectrum? The answer must be that the clear-cut divisions made by 19th- and 20th-century historians between rationalists and empiricists, occultists and scientists, vitalists and mechanists are misleading; our categories simply were not theirs. Locke and van Helmont were friends because of their mutual interest in medicine, alchemy, and natural philosophy, their sincere interest in education and improving the lot of the poor,² and their heartfelt desire to promote tolerance and ecumenism. They were also fellow

¹ "John Locke, the founder of British empiricism, was also the seventeenth century's staunchest defender of reason in religion and politics." Vere Chappell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), cover advertisement.

² Both van Helmont and Locke were interested in manufacturing schemes to employ the poor and in ways to help the poor through reform in the poor law (Locke) and the setting up of legitimate pawn shops (van Helmont). They were both also interested in improving education. For Locke's interest in these matters, see Locke's published works and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Locke c. 30: references to linen manufacture with plans for promoting manufacture of linen in Ireland; f. 86 on the employment of poor children and vagrants (1697); f. 94 an early draft by Locke of his scheme of poor-law reform (1697). Van Helmont's first book, *Alphabeti vere naturalis Hebraici brevissima Delineatio* . . . (Sulzbach, 1667) contained a new method for teaching the deaf to speak. Van Helmont suggested agricultural and manufacturing schemes to Christian August of Sulzbach to restore prosperity to his territories which had been ravaged by the Thirty Years' War (van Helmont, "Memoirs," London, British Library, Ms. Sloane 530). Van Helmont's proposal for pawn shops can be found in London, Royal Society, classified Papers 1660–1740, xxiv, Collins, Oldenburg, Hooke, no. 47.

members of the Republic of Letters, within which toleration seemed to have been almost complete.³

Locke's philosophy developed from the 1660s to the 1690s. In the 1660s he accepted the view of the vast majority of his contemporaries that innate ideas provided the only sure foundation for morality and religion; he was an unequivocal opponent of religious toleration and the right of political resistance; and he supported the right of governments to prescribe arbitrarily "indifferent"⁴ matters in both Church and state. In addition, he was a Trinitarian, who accepted the idea of original sin and the fall. All this changed over the next twenty-five years as Locke became increasingly unorthodox in both religion and politics, advocating a radical ideal of self-determination in both spheres. These significant changes were largely due to the changing nature of Locke's circumstances and friendships. His years on the continent, especially in Holland from 1683 to 1688, were important in this regard because of the unusual degree of freedom in thought and expression tolerated there.⁵ Van Helmont was one of many people Locke met while in Holland. It is the purpose of this essay to chart the course of their friendship, to explain its basis, and to suggest the various ways their ideas converged.

Locke and van Helmont were mutual friends of Benjamin Furly (1636–1714), an English merchant, Quaker, and eventual free thinker, who had settled in Holland as a young man. Both stayed with Furly in Rotterdam for extended and overlapping periods and both were members of the "Lantern," a group founded by Furly of free-spirited individuals who saw themselves as beacons of light in an all-too-intolerant world. John Marshall describes Furly's house as being "at the epicentre of the early Enlightenment."⁶ It is surely interesting that van Helmont was present at this epicenter and that it attracted a wide variety of intellectuals. As one can see from perusing Locke's correspondence, those whom Furly, Locke, and van Helmont counted

³ Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁴ The so-called "adiophora," or peripheral matters, were primarily ceremonial formalities, e.g., bowing at name of Jesus, using the sign of the cross in baptism, kneeling at the Lord's Supper, wearing the surplice, etc.

⁵ John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. xvi and 78, note 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 331. See also William I. Hull, *Benjamin Furly and Quakerism in Rotterdam* (Swarthmore, PA: Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, No. 5, 1941).

as close friends were united in their staunch opposition to intolerance and persecution, although they differed widely in their interests, religious affiliations, and beliefs. Jean Philippus van Limborch and Jean Le Clerc, for example, were leading Remonstrants who battled constantly against intolerance in all forms, Catholic and Protestant. A similar ecumenical streak characterized the many physicians that were part of their circle of friends, such as Pieter Guenellon, Egbertus Veen, David Thomas, and Daniel Foot. Thomas and Foot were both chemical physicians, not Galenists, and consequently shared Locke's interest in the work of both Paracelsus and the elder and younger van Helmont.⁷ Foot was a member of the "Dry Club," a discussion group founded by Locke that was similar to Furly's Lantern.⁸ When van Helmont was in London in the 1680s, Foot acted as his amanuensis, transcribing his medical and chemical aphorisms as well as his memoirs.⁹ Given Furly's role as a Quaker apologist, such well-known Quakers as George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, Tobias Ludwig Kohlhaus, and George Keith frequented Furly's house (along with many less well known Quakers). The Collegiants—Petrus Serrarius, Adam Boreel, and Galenus Abrahamsz—were also associates and friends, although, upon occasion, they debated the Quakers. Boreel was a participant in the "Lantern." The Greek scholar and Professor of politics, history, and eloquence at Utrecht, Joannes Georgius Graevius, who knew Spinoza and wrote a critique of his philosophy, was another intimate friend of Locke, Furly, and van Helmont,¹⁰ as was William Popple (1638–1708), one of the less known but most ardent defenders of religious liberty of the period. Locke may even have met Popple through van Helmont.¹¹ Other

⁷ Locke refers frequently to the elder van Helmont in his *Journals*. See Kenneth Dewhurst, *John Locke (1632–1704), Physician and Philosopher: A Medical Biography with an Edition of the Medical Notes in his Journals* (London: The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1963).

⁸ Called "Dry" presumably because serious subjects were discussed. Among Locke's papers are "Rule of the Dry Club: for the Amicable Improvement of Mix'd Conversation," written by William Popple (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Locke, c. 25, f. 56).

⁹ "Dr. Foote's Translations of van Helmont's Works," London, British Library, Ms. Sloane 530. See also Ms. Sloane 3984, ff. 151–2.

¹⁰ *The Correspondence of John Locke*, 8 vols., ed. E. S. De Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976–1989), 3:565. Cited hereafter as *Correspondence*.

¹¹ Caroline Robbins, "Absolute Liberty: The Life and Thought of William Popple (1638–1708)," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 24 (1967), p. 206. Popple refers to van Helmont in his correspondence with Locke.

names that appear frequently in Locke's correspondence as mutual friends are the publishers Henrik Wetstein and Awnsham Churchill,¹² the Unitarian John Freke, and no less a figure than Pierre Bayle.¹³ To a great extent it was the very heterogeneity of this circle that promoted the heterodoxy and concern for toleration that left its mark on Locke, Furly, and van Helmont.

Locke apparently became acquainted with van Helmont late in 1686, in all probability through Furly. However, Locke had heard about van Helmont and may even have read some of his books before they met for, in a letter to Locke dated June 16, 1684, Esther Masham¹⁴ mentions "Helmonts Opinion" of the transmigration of souls in a way that assumed Locke's familiarity with it.¹⁵ Five years earlier, in a letter to Nicolas Toinard, Locke mentions the *Kabbala denudata*, a work edited by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth in collaboration with van Helmont.¹⁶

¹² Wetstein and Churchill published works by both Locke and van Helmont.

¹³ Furly's sympathy for Bayle is apparent in letters he wrote to Locke. See Furly to Locke, 17/27 November 1693, *Correspondence*, 4:745–6, and Furly to Locke, 31 July/10 August 1694, 5:96.

¹⁴ The daughter of Ralph Cudworth (1617–88), Lady Masham (1659–1708) was a highly intelligent and well-read woman as well as a devoted friend of Locke. By 1691 Locke's primary residence was at Oates, the home of Lady Masham and her husband Sir Francis. See Sarah Hutton, "Between Platonism and Enlightenment: Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 1 (1993): 29–54; Luisa Simonutti, "Damaris Cudworth Masham: una Lady della Repubblica delle Lettere," *Studi in Onore di Eurgenio Garin* (Pisa, 1987), pp. 141–65.

¹⁵ "If I ever did Act any Part upon the Stage of this Earth in the Anti-diluvian State of it, that golden Age, I wish it were Possible for me now to Remember it, that I might have no Temptation to Quarrel with Providence for giving me Inclinations so little Sutable to this, and so unlike ever to be Gratify'd; Tho if I could have Faith enough to beleieve Helmonts Opinion, and Could with as strong a Fancie conceit my self to have been Methuselah . . . I think it might do all <but> as well, and I could not sure then want Patience to Compleate my Thousand Yeares either now, Or in any other Age of the World . . .," Lady Masham to Locke, 16 June 1684, *Correspondence*, 2:619–20.

¹⁶ The *Kabbala Denudata* (*The Kabbalah unveiled, or, the Transcendental, Metaphysical, and Theological Teachings of the Jews*) was published in two volumes in 1677 and 1684. This monumental work offered Christians the largest collection of kabbalistic texts published up to that time in a Latin translation that was superior to anything published previously. The classic studies of the Kabbalah are Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1954); Idem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965); Idem, "Zur Geschichte der Anfänge der christlichen Kabbala," *Essays Presented to Leo Baeck* (London, 1954), pp. 158–93; Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, trans. by David Goldstein. The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, eds., Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, and Vivian D. Lipman, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale

Locke's interest in the *Kabbala denudata* is another indication of how much broader his interests were than generally imagined. He was interested in all forms of religious and philosophical thought. While in Holland he came into contact with people of many different persuasions, as one can see from his circle of friends described above. He even visited the Labadists at Lady Masham's request and expressed his less than favorable view of them in letters to her.¹⁷ Locke's reading was as eclectic as his friendships. For example, Le Clerc sent him Johannes Schefferus's *De Natura et Constitutione Philosophiae Italicae, seu Pythagoricae Liber Singularis* (Uppsala, 1664) and suggested that if he was interested in Chaldean philosophy, which he was, he should read Proclus's commentary on Plato and Iamblichus's *de Mysteriis*, as well as the commentaries of Psellus and Plethon on the Chaldean oracles.¹⁸ These are hardly works one would expect a rationalist and empiricist to seek out. Locke's own library indicates the breadth of his interests and the impossibility of neatly categorizing his philosophical orientation. His curiosity about Pythagoras is especially interesting because van Helmont thought of himself (and was thought of by others) as reviving key elements of Pythagorean philosophy.¹⁹ The

University Press, 1988). For the influence of the Kabbalah on Christians, see Ernst Benz, "La Kabbale Chrétienne en Allemagne du XVI au XVIII siècle," in A. Faivre and F. Tristan, eds., *Kabbalistes Chrétiens: Cahiers d'Hermetisme* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1979); Moshe Idel, "Jewish Kabbalah and Platonism in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," in Lenn E. Goodman, ed., *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought* (v. 7) in *Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern* (Albany: State University Press, 1992), pp. 319–351; Idem, "Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance," in B. D. Cooperman, ed., *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 186–242; Allison P. Coudert, "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare," *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1975): 633–52; Eadem, "Henry More, the Kabbalah, and the Quakers," in Richard Kroll, Richard Ashcraft, and Perez Zagorin, ed., *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England, 1640–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 31–67; Eadem, *Leibniz and the Kabbalah* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994); Eadem, "A Quaker-Kabbalist Controversy: George Fox's Reaction to Francis Mercury van Helmont," *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976), pp. 171–89.

¹⁷ Lady Masham to Locke, 16 June 1684 and 25 August 1684, *Correspondence*, 2:620–1 and 631–2.

¹⁸ Le Clerc to Locke, 16 August 1692, *Correspondence*, 4:501–3.

¹⁹ One of van Helmont's admirers, Herman von der Hardt (1660–1746), professor of oriental languages and librarian at Helmstedt, thought that van Helmont had been eminently successful in doing just this: "I marvel at the genius of Helmont. I have learned many things from this man that could not be known except from him. In this old man I have observed not the traces but the very essence of the ancient first philosophy of Pythagoras, Plato, and the Cabbala." von der Hardt to Leibniz, 11 July 1696, Hanover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Ms. Lbr 389, f. 29.

fact that van Helmont visited Locke in England in 1693 and stayed with him at Lady Masham's for five months, from October through February,²⁰ suggests a level of friendship and intimacy that would appear inexplicable if one accepts conventional categorizations in the history of science and philosophy. Unfortunately Locke did not leave the kind of paper trail in regard to van Helmont that Leibniz did. It is therefore more difficult to recover the details of their friendship, though not impossible.

From comments scattered through Locke's letters, especially those to Benjamin Furly, one gains a sense of Locke's affectionate regard for van Helmont. After his return to England in February 1689, he repeatedly sends greeting to "Our old master" or "Our Friend" [van Helmont] in his letters to Furly. Locke's affection is not without a degree of jocularity. Both he and Furly were well aware of van Helmont's fixation on the Kabbalah and his ceaseless proselytizing on the Kabbalah's behalf. In one letter to Furly Locke describes himself "as busy as a hen with one chick, or our freind [sic] with his new disciple." Furly had told Locke about a Labadist whom van Helmont was trying to convert to the Kabbalah with all his persuasive powers. Locke comments, "I am glad our friend is soe well as to endure soe much fatigue but in those matters he has an admirable faculty of talkeing without much labouring his thoughts." However, in the next sentence he adds, "My kinde remembrance to him. . . ."²¹

Yet for all their jocularity, both Furly and Locke were interested enough in van Helmont's theories to read his books, to comment on them, correct them, and even help to publish them. Locke's library contained van Helmont's *Paradoxal Discourses* (1685); *Observationes circa hominem ejusq morbos* (1692); *The Divine Being and its Attributes* (1693); *Quaedam praemeditatae et consideratae Cogitationes super . . . Genesis* (1697); *Seder Olam* (1693); *A Cabbalistic Dialogue* (1682); and *Two Hundred Queries . . . concerning the doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls* (1684). He also owned two works elaborating on this last treatise: *A Letter to a Gentleman touching the treatise entitled Two Hundred Queries . . .* (1690) and *The harmlesse Opinion of the Revolution of Humane Soules* (London,

²⁰ Van Helmont arrived at Oates on October 7, 1693 (*Correspondence*, 4:730). He was apparently still at Oates when William Popple wrote to Locke on February 3, 1694 because at the end of his letter Popple presents his "humble service" to van Helmont, (*Ibid.*, 5:7).

²¹ Locke to Furly, 30 December 1687/9 January 1688, *Correspondence*, 3:326-9.

1694).²² In addition, he possessed J. B. van Helmont's *Ortus Medicinae* and two books by von Rosenroth, *A Dissertation concerning the pre-existence of Souls* (1684) and *Explication of the Visions of the Book of Revelation*, written under Knorr's pseudonym Peganus and translated into English in 1670 by Henry Oldenburg, the Secretary of the Royal Society. Furly's library contained van Helmont's *Quaedam praemeditatae et consideratae Cogitationes super . . . Genesis* (1697); *The Divine Being and its Attributes*, which Furly translated into English; *Opuscula Philosophia; Paradoxal Discourses*; *The Spirit of Diseases*; and two copies of the Dutch version of J. B. van Helmont's *Dageraad oft Nieuwe Opkomst der Geneeskunst . . .* (Rotterdam, 1660).

It is perhaps even more surprising to find excerpts from the *Kabbala denudata* among Locke's manuscripts. These include portions of a preparatory letter written by Knorr about the utility of the *Zohar* for Christians,²³ five pages of notes on the *Adumbratio Cabbalae Christianae*, the last treatise in the *Kabbala denudata*, written by van Helmont, and a diagram of the *sefirot*, the ten emanations from the God-head in kabbalistic cosmogony. Locke is clearly critical of the Kabbalah. He titles his notes "Dubia circa philosophiam Orientalem" and brings up a point he makes so forcefully throughout his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* about the danger of using "words without a clear and distinct notion."²⁴ But while he had his doubts about the solutions offered by the *Kabbala denudata*, he was clearly interested in the very same questions broached in that work: what is the nature of God, the Messiah, spirits, and matter; why was world created, and why did souls fall; do souls preexist and are they restored to their original purity?

In addition to these excerpts from the *Kabbala denudata*, there is a discussion of Hebrew chronology among Locke's papers taken from van Helmont's *Seder Olam* (1694).²⁵ Like the majority of his contemporaries, including Sir Isaac Newton, Locke was convinced that the millennium was at hand and consequently intrigued by the various calculations used to determine its advent. A further note appears on the resurrection. It is headed "F.M.V.H." and contains a passage

²² See Harrison and Laslett, eds., *The Library of John Locke*, items 1413–1416a (p. 152) and items 2470–2473 (p. 220).

²³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Locke c. 17, ff. 256–7. This comes from the *Kabbala denudata* 1, pt. 2, A 2–3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, "Dubia circa Philosophiam Orientalem," f. 75.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 258–6.

advocating van Helmont's belief that hell is not eternal but "only for ye good of ye creature, it cannot remain forever in torment but shall suffer greater & longer proportionable to his sins & shall come out as soon as it has pd [paid] the utmost farthing."²⁶ Locke was well aware of van Helmont's conviction that pain and suffering were "medicinal," an idea that had provided some solace for van Helmont's patron, Anne Conway, who suffered from excruciating headaches.²⁷ She emphasizes this idea in her own treatise, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, which van Helmont arranged to have published in Latin (1690) and English (1692). If van Helmont had informed Locke about Lady Conway and her treatise, it would help to explain why a manuscript copy of a poem "on the Love of Pain" written by Adam Boreel and dedicated to Lady Conway appears among his papers.²⁸

In addition to the excerpts and notes described above, among Locke's papers there is also a short critique by Knorr von Rosenroth of the abridged version of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* published in French in 1688. This was one of the earliest critiques of Locke's *Essay*, and it will be discussed below.

Van Helmont's medical and scientific theories also interested Locke. In the *Journals* Locke kept while in Holland, he recorded van Helmont's cures for gangrene, plague, and scabies.²⁹ Like most natural philosophers of the period, Locke and van Helmont were interested in practical inventions, which explains the presence among Locke's papers of a drawing dated 1688 illustrating a device made by van Helmont for polishing stones³⁰ and for the inclusion in Locke's *Journals* of van

²⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 248.

²⁷ Sarah Hutton, "Ancient Wisdom and Modern Philosophy: Anne Conway, F. M. van Helmont and the Seventeenth-Century Interchange of Ideas," *Quaestiones Ininitae*, Publications of the Department of Philosophy, Utrecht University 9 (1994); Eadem, "Anne Conway critique d'Henry More: L'esprit et la Matière," *Archives de Philosophie* 58 (1995), pp. 371–84; Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (London, 1690), trans. Allison P. Coudert and Taylor Corse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Locke, c. 32, f. 47.

²⁹ Kenneth Dewhurst, *John Locke (1632–1704), Physician and Philosopher: A Medical Biography with an Edition of the Medical Notes in his Journals* (London: The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1963), pp. 276–7, 280–1, and 288.

³⁰ Ms. Locke c. 30, f. 98: "Machina ad poliendos lapides pretiosos, [Francis Mercury van] Helmont, [16]88." Locke and van Helmont's mutual interest in inventions provides another reason for their friendship. Among the "Curiosities" listed in the catalogue of Furlly's library were several made by Locke and van Helmont. Locke, for example, presented Furlly with a special bookcase he had designed with

Helmont's recipes for making boot polish, preparing a primitive black-board from kid's skin, and preserving beer.³¹ Locke also recorded van Helmont's observations on the way crystals and pebbles "grow and nourish."³² Van Helmont believed everything in the world was alive. He was a vitalist and consequently rejected the mechanical philosophy. Although Locke is often thought of as subscribing to the mechanical philosophy, he was acutely aware of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of providing mechanical explanations for natural phenomena. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* he discusses the daunting problems facing mechanists.³³ Margaret Wilson argues that Locke's professed pessimism about the possibility of attaining genuine scientific knowledge undermined his adherence to mechanism. She believes that Locke came to the conclusion that it was impossible to explain all secondary qualities as consequences of primary ones and consequently that some properties must have been added by God.³⁴ The fact that Locke bothered to copy down van Helmont's observations may indicate that in the face of these obstacles to a comprehensive mechanical philosophy he was willing to consider the kind of vitalistic explanations offered by van Helmont.

Van Helmont's vitalism, which was an essential aspect of his neoplatonic and kabbalistic philosophy, went hand in hand with his belief in universal salvation, his conviction that spirit and matter were simply different modes of the same substance, and his emphasis on goodness as the chief attribute of God. Just as every created thing had emanated from a just and benevolent God, so would it return to this God after repeated reincarnations, during which it became increasing pure and perfect. Is there any evidence that Locke came close to accepting any of these ideas? There appears to be.

Scholars are still debating exactly what Locke's view of the afterlife was. In his early years he accepted the orthodox view of an eternal

"Book-shelves for all sizes of books, invented by John Locke, Esq., being very convenient for transportation without removing the books from them" (*Bibliotheca Furliana*, p. 352). Van Helmont's inventions include a chair and desk that could be heightened or lowered for invalides, two turning lathes, two wheels that could be operated with two hands, and "a beautiful winder" (*Ibid.*, pp. 348-9).

³¹ Dewhurst, *John Locke*, pp. 276-7 and 280-1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ "Of the Extent of Humane Knowledge," John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), IV, iii, 29, p. 559.

³⁴ Margaret Wilson, "Superadded Properties: The Limits of Mechanism in Locke," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (1979), pp. 143-50.

hell of fire and brimstone, but by the end of his life he concluded instead that the righteous would be rewarded with eternal life, while the unrighteous would be annihilated.³⁵ Because this was a position taken by some Socinians, it contributed to the charge that Locke was a crypto-Socinian.³⁶ But Locke may also have shared van Helmont's opinion that the concept of eternal punishment undermined the very idea that God was just and merciful. For how could an infinite God punish finite human beings infinitely for their finite sins?³⁷ Van Helmont's categorical rejection of the concept of an eternal hell may therefore have been a factor in the evolution of Locke's view of hell, although this was also an argument used by Socinians as well. But what about two other key concepts in van Helmont philosophy, the preexistence of souls and their reincarnation? No one, as far as I know, has ever suggested that Locke entertained either of these notions, yet among Locke's correspondence there is an extremely interesting letter written by William Clarke, a so-called "Helmontian" Quaker, who defended van Helmont's kabbalistic theory of reincarnation.³⁸ From Clarke's letter it appears that he was well acquainted with Locke and that he had visited Oates at the very time van Helmont was there. While at Oates he had apparently shown Locke, van Helmont, and the Mashams the draft of his defense of van Helmont's theory. In his letter, written the following August after both the publication of his book and the attack on it published by one "J.H.," he complains about the unfairness of this attack. But what is most extraordinary is that he asks Locke if he would be willing to write a rebuttal with the clear hope that Locke would be. As Clarke says, "I Am in some hops you may make some remarks your selfe on this booke tho you put not your nam to the publick. . . ."³⁹ Clarke even included the draft of his pamphlet on the

³⁵ John Milner believed that this was Locke's view. See his *An Account of Mr. Locke's Religion* (London, 1700), pp. 151–2. One of Locke's correspondents, a certain "J.V." or "J.N." agreed and was extremely worried that such a view "seems to disarm the Terrors of Hell, and so weakens the bands of Religion" (May 1697, *Correspondence*, 6:127).

³⁶ D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 73ff.

³⁷ This was a point that van Helmont stressed in his *Two Hundred Queries . . . concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Human Souls . . .* (London, 1684), pp. 125–6.

³⁸ For a discussion of "Helmontian" Quakers, see Allison P. Coudert, "A Quaker-Kabbalist Controversy: George Fox's Reaction to Francis Mercury van Helmont," *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976), pp. 171–89.

³⁹ Clarke to Locke, 11 February, 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:97–102.

grounds that his views had been significantly misrepresented by J.H. This draft appears to be the only remaining version of Clarke's pamphlet. Clarke's letter with its request that Locke defend a key kabbalistic hypothesis appears extraordinary in the light of modern appraisals of Locke and suggests that reappraisals are necessary.

A constant theme in Furly's correspondence with Locke is the dangers of sectarianism and the intolerance and persecution it invariably engenders. The letters between the two men offer ample evidence of their evolving ecumenism and increasingly undogmatic approach to religion. Furly had begun to have severe reservations about his association with the Quakers. He deeply resented being told what to think and how to behave by his co-religionists, especially in unimportant matters. His disillusionment with Quaker customs appears to have been encouraged by Locke.⁴⁰ By February, 1694, the gap between Furly and the Quakers had become all but unbridgeable. Furly makes this fact clear in a letter to Locke that reveals his growing dissatisfaction with what he sees as the Quakers' escalating intolerance. Furly ends his letter with the wish that both Locke and van Helmont, who was staying with Locke at the time, could come to Rotterdam and form the kind of tolerant, ecumenical society which the three of them had apparently spoken about so often:

Could we have your and the Barons [van Helmont] good company, it would be very acceptable to us, and could we find, or frame such a society, as we have sometimes spoken of, and you now again mention, we should have all the content we could wish for; in the meane while, we must be content to stumble on; as well as we can, and expect what Providence will next hand forth to us; for I am fully assured that Priest-Craft will fall, and cannot stand long against that light, that has so far opend mens eyes to see through the Tiffany cover of their fulsom Authority. . . So with endeared respects from my dearest and self to Sir. Fr. My lady the and your self I remain. . . .⁴¹

The commitment of the three friends to toleration and their intense hatred of persecution is evident in the steps Locke, Furly, and van Helmont took to publish the *Liber Sententiae Thoulousae*, a manuscript describing the operations and decrees of the Toulouse Inquisition from 1300 to 1326. Letters between Locke and Furly describe in great detail the laborious history of the procuring, editing, and publishing

⁴⁰ Furly to Locke, May 24, 1689, *Correspondence*, 3:624-6.

⁴¹ Furly to Locke, 30 January/9 February 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:3-4.

of this manuscript, which Furly had obtained from the Englishman William Waller. Locke suggested that Furly send it via van Helmont to van Limborch for editing and publication, which he did.⁴²

The topic of heresy and persecution comes up continually in Locke's correspondence. These were sensitive issues for all three men. Twenty-five years before van Helmont met Locke, he had been imprisoned by the Inquisition for the heresy of "judaizing."⁴³ The fact that he had been released after nearly two years of incarceration did not mean, however, that he was forever out of danger. In fact, in August, 1694 Furly wrote to Locke, expressing his concern about van Helmont's safety. Van Helmont had left Holland for Sulzbach, and Furly was worried that he might be captured by the Jesuits and literally roasted alive: "The Baron is now, so finally gone I know not wither, that I beleeeve we shall never see him more, If he fall into the Jesuits hands, they will treat him, as ill, as John Calvin treated Michiel [sic] Servetus in Geneva, roasting him alive with green wood. . . ."⁴⁴ Furly was not in a much better position. In the eyes of the vast majority of Christians he was a heretic simply because he was a Quaker. As for Locke, he may well have joked to Furly early on in their friendship that he wanted him "to article with the Baron [van Helmont] that he shall not pervert me when I return again to his conversation,"⁴⁵ but in the eyes of a good many of his contemporaries Locke was decidedly "perverted" when it came to his religious beliefs. Locke was acutely aware of the perils faced by anyone who professed unorthodox religious views. As his correspondence reveals, he carefully monitored cases involving heresy and the persecution of heretics. Van Limborch, for example, kept him abreast of the war that was being waged against Balthasar Bekker by orthodox Calvinists. Bekker had the audacity to question the existence of witches and this led to his dismissal from his ministry and eventual destitution. Locke also keenly aware of trial and execution of

⁴² Locke to van Limborch, 4/14 March 1688, *Correspondence*, 3:393. On the history of the manuscript, see M. A. E. Nickson, "Locke and the Inquisition of Toulouse," *The British Museum Quarterly* 36 (1972), pp. 93-2.

⁴³ The inquisitorial records dealing with van Helmont's apprehension and imprisonment by the Inquisition have been printed as an Appendix to Klaus Jaitner, "Der Pfalz-Sulzbacher Hof in der europäischen Ideengeschichte des 17 Jahrhunderts," *Wolfenbüttler Beiträge*, Hrsg. Paul Raabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988), pp. 273-404.

⁴⁴ Furly to Locke, 31 July/10 August 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:95.

⁴⁵ Locke to Furly, 20/30 July 1687, *Correspondence*, 3:231.

Thomas Aikenhead, an eighteen year old Scotsman who was charged with blasphemy on the 23 of December 1696 and hanged and buried under the gallows some two weeks later.⁴⁶ Aikenhead was charged with abrogating two Scottish laws punishing those who defamed God or denied the Trinity.

Locke's interest in the Aikenhead case is eminently understandable given the fact that he himself was accused of denying the Trinity.⁴⁷ Although Locke professed to the end of his life that this charge was not true, there is ample evidence that his critics were right. In Locke's opinion the only Christian doctrines that were admissible were those clearly stated in the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul. Having studied these texts carefully and having sounded the opinions of his close friends, Locke appears to have concluded that the doctrine of the Trinity had no scriptural basis. This conclusion was also reached by Isaac Newton, who sent Locke two manuscripts in which Newton dismissed the Trinitarian proof texts, I John v, 7 and I Timothy iii, 16, as later interpolations. Locke thought highly of Newton's interpretations of scripture.⁴⁸ He was in the process of finding a publisher for Newton's manuscripts but, sensing the danger, Newton insisted that Locke return them unpublished.

Locke's tacit denial of the doctrine of the Trinity went hand in hand with other unorthodox ideas, for example with his denial of original sin and the eternity of hell. What is particularly interesting in the context of the broader discussion of Locke's relationship with van Helmont is that van Helmont denied all of these things as well on the basis of his kabbalistic beliefs. While I do not claim that van Helmont's ideas shaped Locke's, it is interesting and important, I believe, to point out the ways in which Locke and van Helmont may have reinforced each other's unorthodox opinions.

⁴⁶ Michael Hunter, "'Aikenhead the Atheist': The Context and Consequences of Articulate Irreligion in the Late Seventeenth Century," in M. Hunter and D. Wootton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 221–54.

⁴⁷ John Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Several Causes of Atheism* (1695); Idem, *Socinianism Unmask'd* (London 1696); Idem, *The Socinian Creed* (London, 1697); John Milner, *An Account of Mr Lock's Religion* (London, 1700); Edward Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Trinity* (London 1696). G. A. J. Rogers, "John Locke, Conservative Radical," in Roger Lund, ed., *The Margins of Orthodoxy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

⁴⁸ H. McLachlan, *The Religious Opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1941), p. 101.

By denying original sin and the eternity of hell, Locke and van Helmont removed the rationale for the orthodox Christian view of Jesus as equal to the Father. For if human beings were not innately and incorrigibly sinful as a result of Adam's fall, then there was no need for Christ's satisfaction, or atonement, or for the divine grace that supposedly only came to men through belief in him. Van Limborch was troubled by statements Locke made in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) for precisely these reasons. In a letter dated March 16/26, 1697, he tells Locke that he cannot understand how he can claim that the righteous have no need of grace but have an inherent right to the "tree of life," when in other places in the very same book he correctly emphasizes that salvation can only come through faith in Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ Van Limborch's confusion is justified. Locke does appear to be inconsistent on these points. In his *Essay* he argues that there is a natural law of morality that all men can grasp though their reason. Men should therefore praise God because:

he hath spread before all the World, such legible characters of his works and Providence, and given all Mankind so sufficient a light of Reason, that they to whom this written Word never came, could not (when-ever they set themselves to search) either doubt of the Being of a GOD, or of the Obedience due to Him.⁵⁰

Locke makes the same point in *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. All men can be saved "if they acknowledged their faults, disapproved the iniquity of their transgression, begged his pardon, and resolved in earnest, for the future, to conform their actions to this rule, which they owned to be just and right."⁵¹ Locke seems to have completely reversed this position by the time he wrote his posthumously published *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul to the Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians*. His commentary on Ephesians ii, 8 makes it crystal clear that salvation depends on revelation, grace, and belief in Christ.⁵² There are many other passages stressing the same reciprocal relationship between grace, faith, and salvation.⁵³

Gerard Reedy suggests that the attempt to find consistency in

⁴⁹ Van Limborch to Locke, 16/26 March 1697, *Correspondence*, 6:48–50.

⁵⁰ *Essay*, III, x, 23, p. 490.

⁵¹ *The Works of John Locke*, 10 vols. (London, 1823; rpt. Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963), 6:113.

⁵² *A Paraphrase and notes on the Epistles of St Paul . . .*, 2 vols., ed. Arthur W. Wainwright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), Ephesians, ii, 8 (c), 2:628–9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Romans, vii, 11, 2:554.

Locke's thought from the *Essay* through the *Paraphrase* is "an acrobatic activity, perhaps prompted more by our desire for consistency than by Locke's."⁵⁴ It is certainly true that by the time Locke wrote the *Paraphrase* his view of human nature had darkened. He places greater emphasis on human sinfulness and is much less sanguine about the power of human reason either to discern or accept the law of nature. Yet, for all Reedy's caution, I cannot refrain from doing exactly what he warns against by pointing out that Locke takes a very different position in his commentary on Romans ii, 26. Here he reintroduces the idea that there is such a thing as a "natural and eternal rule of rectitude" and he claims that the Gentiles acknowledged this law and were "justified" . . . "if they kept to it."⁵⁵ Locke is even more emphatic in his commentary on Ephesians ii, 15. Here he says that the "Law of Nature," or "that unmoveable Rule of Right," was actually already contained in the Old Testament. Jesus simply made the knowledge of this law "more easy and certain than it was before." These passages reassert the idea so clearly set for in the *Essay* and *The Reasonableness* that there is a Natural or Moral Law available to all men. Thus, while Locke assigns a more decisive role to Christ and the Christian revelation in the *Paraphrase*, he has not relinquished the idea of a preexisting, eternal natural law. He had, however, come to realize that the rational capacity of most humans was limited and that, consequently, revelation, with the clear promise of reward and threat of punishment, was a more certain and compelling source of morality. As Philip Abrams has argued, Locke could not relinquish the idea that natural law existed without undermining the basic Christian view of the world as rationally and divinely constituted. But neither could he deny his own insight into the fundamental subjectivity of human thought. These two largely antithetical ideas set up a tension and dualism in his philosophy which he was unable to transcend. Abrams explains this dualism as the consequence of the conflict between his traditional education and the novel insights he gained in the course of writing his *Essay on Human Understanding*.⁵⁶ His understanding of the irrationality and subjectivity

⁵⁴ G. Reedy, "Spinoza, Stillingfleet, Prophecy, and 'Enlightenment'," in J. A. L. Lemay, ed., *Deism, Masonry, and the Enlightenment: Essays Honoring Alfred Owen Aldridge* (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1987), p. 49.

⁵⁵ *Paraphrase*, Romans, ii, 26, 2:501.

⁵⁶ Philip Abrams, *John Locke: Two Tracts on Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 90.

of most people's thinking did not lead Locke, however, to despair but to an increasing commitment to education. If some few human beings could think rationally and objectively, many more might be taught to, given the fact that humans are of "equal natural parts."⁵⁷

What are we to make of these conflicting statements? Did Locke believe, as van Helmont so clearly did, that salvation was available to all men, whatever their religion, as long as they employed their reason to discover the eternally existing divine law? Or did he conclude at the end of his life that human reason was unequal to the task and only those who accepted the Christian revelation and believed in Christ could hope for salvation? Arthur Wainwright, the editor of the *Paraphrase*, leans towards the latter view. He thinks that with their "assertions about the limitations of reason, philosophy, and human discovery" the *Paraphrases* "mark the culmination of an important shift in Locke's attitude."⁵⁸ Nabil Matar provides additional evidence for such a shift with his discussion of Locke's changing attitude towards the Jews.

Matar claims that, in his first *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), Locke anticipates the position John Toland was to take towards the Jews some three decades later: he calls for their toleration and naturalization in England. Matar emphasizes how unusual this position was because there were absolutely "no Christianising strings attached."⁵⁹ In other words, Locke was one of the few true "philos-Semites," because he tolerated Jews as Jews, not simply as potential Christians. By the time he wrote the second *Letter of Toleration* only a year later, however, Locke modified his position. While he continued to advocate the toleration and naturalization of Jews, he now does so on the grounds that this will facilitate their conversion. Matar argues that a further deterioration in Locke's attitude towards the Jews appear in the *Paraphrase*. Here Locke argues for the conversion of the Jews and their restoration to their homeland, Palestine. England was no longer a suitable home for the Jews and their toleration as Jews was no longer acceptable.

Matar suggests that Locke's friendship with van Limborch was a factor in changing his attitude towards the Jews. While Locke was

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵⁸ *Paraphrase*, Introduction, 1:33.

⁵⁹ Nabil Matar, "John Locke and the Jews," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993), p. 56.

in Holland, van Limborch engaged in a disputation with Isaac (Balthasar) Orobio de Castro (c. 1620–87), one of the most prominent *conversos* in Amsterdam.⁶⁰ Van Limborch published his debate with Orobio in 1687 in his *De Veritate Religionis Christianiae Amica Collatio cum Erudito Judeo*. Locke played a decisive role in the publication of this work as one can see from van Limborch's letter thanking him for his help in editing the manuscript.⁶¹ Matar refers to "the strident Locke who emerges from the correspondence" with van Limborch.⁶² He may have in mind a passage like the following: "I am glad that the Jew is sweating in the press, but I fancy he will sweat even more freely when the press releases him into the open air, and that he will not easily find any cooling relief in his metaphysic."⁶³ Van Limborch's concern with converting Jews appears again in letters describing a young Christian woman who was on the verge of converting to Judaism when van Limborch successfully intervened. Locke was extremely interested in obtaining a "narration" of this event which lasted for more than twenty hours spread over five days.⁶⁴ Van Limborch obliged in a lengthy letter.⁶⁵

In addition to van Limborch's influence, Matar speculates that Locke's growing interest in biblical studies together with his millenarianism were additional factors promoting the change in his attitude towards the Jews. For the millennium promised in the Gospels would not occur before the conversion of the Jews, and Paul clearly states in Romans 11:26, "all Israel will be saved."

What are we to make of all this? Is Matar right in thinking that Locke became increasingly intolerant in his attitude towards Jews and non-Christians in general? He goes so far as to say that those who, with Locke, advocated the restoration of the Jews to Palestine were inherently anti-Semitic because they had no tolerance for Jews as Jews but only as potential Christians converts. Hence one could

⁶⁰ Yosef Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro*, trans. Raphael Loewe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁶¹ "... it is through your care that this whole discussion is appearing in a more polished form. You have removed numerous blemishes, you have supplied arguments that had escaped me, and you have embellished the whole work of my pen; a service which I shall ever acknowledge with gratitude and proclaim to the world (*Correspondence*, 3:258–9).

⁶² Matar, "John Locke and the Jews," p. 50.

⁶³ Locke to van Limborch 14/24 November 1686, *Correspondence*, 3:69.

⁶⁴ Locke to van Limborch, 26 October 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:172–3.

⁶⁵ Van Limborch to Locke, 2/12 December 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:203–33.

conclude that Locke went from extreme tolerance to extreme intolerance. There may, however, be another way to look at the situation.

Was Locke really as tolerant in his attitude towards the Jews in the 1660s and 1670s as Matar believes? If one looks carefully at his argument in the draft *Essay Concerning Toleration* of 1667 it becomes clear that he is not discussing toleration of the Jews but toleration of certain dissenting Christian sects. Locke uses the example of the Jews as a precedent for allowing a more general toleration of Christians. As he says,

'Tis strange to conceive upon what grounds of uniformity any different profession of Christians can be prohibited in a Christian country, where the Jewish religion (which is directly opposite to the principles of Christianity) is tolerated; and would it not be irrational, where the Jewish religion is permitted, that the Christian magistrate, upon pretence of his power in indifferent things, should enjoin or forbid any thing, or any way interpose in their way or manner of worship?⁶⁶

It is difficult to see any real fellow-feeling or tolerance for the Jews in this passage. After all, as Locke claims, their religion is "directly opposite" to Christianity, which could imply that where Christianity is divine, Judaism is demonic. Locke is not saying anything here about how and why the Jews should be tolerated. He is making a case for rational consistency that appears to me to be entirely compatible with anti-Semitism: if the reprobate Jews are tolerated in Christian commonwealths, then how much more should different denominations of Christians be. Locke's attitude towards the Jews in his first *Letter of Toleration* published two decades later is the same. His argument has nothing to do with Jews as Jews; they only appear by way of example. The main arguments for toleration in this letter are the same arguments he presents in the subsequent letters: (1) there must be a separation of Church and State;⁶⁷ (2) matters of indifference in religion should be left up to the individual to accept or reject;⁶⁸ and (3) an individual must decide what is best for his own salvation. In other words, religious conviction must come from the heart not from compulsion. Locke is not tolerant of other reli-

⁶⁶ Matar, "John Locke and the Jews," p. 48.

⁶⁷ "...I esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion, and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other" (*A Letter of Concerning Toleration, Being a Translation of the Epistola de Tolerantia*, in *Works*, 6:9).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 6:24.

gions as valid belief systems but because he thinks the State has no jurisdiction over religion and because he was so aware of the terrible consequences of persecution and intolerance.

Matar's argument that Locke's *Second Letter Concerning Toleration* marks a radical change his attitudes towards the Jews because he there advocates toleration as the means to their conversion is not all that clear from a comparison of the two texts. In the first letter Locke never denies that conversion is the desirable end of toleration. In fact, he says that conversion is a perfectly legitimate aim of the magistrates as long as they do not employ force since force is counterproductive.⁶⁹ To my mind Locke's argument remains virtually the same in the Second Letter: conversion is to be hoped for but never forced.⁷⁰

Locke never gives up the idea that there is only one way to attain salvation, and that is Christianity. He makes this clear in both letters. In the first, the one Matar characterizes as tolerant of Jews as Jews, Locke says: "there . . . [is] but one truth, one way to heaven."⁷¹ In the second he addresses his adversary, Jonas Proast,⁷² as follows: "True religion and Christian religion are, I suppose, to you and me, the same thing."⁷³ This suggests to me that a conversionist goal is an aspect of Locke's attitude towards the Jews from the beginning. What changed was not the conversionist goal but the kind of Christianity to which the Jews (and any other non Christian group) should convert. Fewer and fewer of the Christian doctrines Locke had accepted in his youth remained; predestination, reprobation, eternal punishment, and the Trinity were all eventually discarded until what was left was a belief system that was decidedly unorthodox, if not downright heretical. Matar admits that Locke was so eager to convert the Jews "that he was willing to forego certain controversial dogmas."⁷⁴ One of the reasons Locke wanted a "narration" of how van Limborch had persuaded the young woman not to convert to Judaism was because he thought it offered a less dogmatic and hence more successful way to convert Jews.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6:11–12.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6:62.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6:12.

⁷² Proast attacked Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*, in *The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration Briefly Considered and Answered* (Oxford, 1690).

⁷³ *A Second Letter Concerning Toleration*, in *Works*, 6:63.

⁷⁴ Matar, "John Locke and the Jews," p. 50.

⁷⁵ 26 October, 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:172–3.

Among Locke's manuscripts is a paper containing what might have been the rules for the kind of ecumenical society that he, Furly, and van Helmont had apparently wished to inaugurate. The first three rules of this society of so-called "Pacifick Christians" illustrate the breadth of the three friend's tolerance and the paucity of rules and regulations. Although nominally a society for "Christians," there is nothing in the whole of this document that is especially Christian—no Trinity, no Eucharist, no eternal hell, no excommunication, and certainly no Inquisition. Even more importantly, Scripture is not the only source of knowledge; there is also "the light which enlightens every man that comes into the world." The first four "rules" read as follows:

1. We think nothing is necessary to be known, or believed for salvation, but what *God* hath revealed.

2. We therefore embrace all those who, in sincerity receive the Word of Truth revealed in the Scripture, and obey the light which enlightens every man that comes into the world.

3. We judge no man in meats, or drinks, or habit, or days, or any other outward observances, but leave every one to his freedom in the use of those outward things which he thinks can most contribute to build up the inward man in righteousness, holiness, and the true love of God, and his neighbour, in Christ Jesus.

Rule number 5 emphasizes the tolerance expected of these "Pacifick Christians":

5. We hold it to be an indispensable duty for all Christians to maintain love and charity in the diversity of contrary opinion: by which charity we do not mean an empty sound but an effectual forbearance and good-will. . . .⁷⁶

One last subject needs to be addressed in this essay and that is Locke's relationship to Leibniz since van Helmont was a close friend of both men. Nicholas Jolley has pointed out that there was much more contact between Locke and Leibniz than generally believed. He suggests Thomas Burnett as the principal mediator⁷⁷ while André Robinet thinks that Lady Masham served this function.⁷⁸ No one,

⁷⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Locke, c. 17, f. 80.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Jolley, *Leibniz and Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 35.

⁷⁸ A. Robinet, "La Reception du System de Cudworth par G.W. Leibniz," in G. Rogers and S. Hutton, eds., *The Cambridge Platonists and the World* (Kluwer, forthcoming).

however, has considered the possibility of van Helmont, although he visited Leibniz shortly after his extended visit to Locke in 1693–4. Van Helmont had also brought the *Abregé* of Locke's *Essay* to the attention of Knorr von Rosenroth, who sent Locke one of the earliest critiques of it in 1668.

It used to be thought that the major point of contention between Locke and Leibniz lay in their diametrically opposed views of innate ideas. While it is true that Locke denied the so-called "naive" form of innatism, which postulated that everything from the idea of colors to logical axioms existed in the mind, he was not a sensualist, pure and simple. In fact, there was a place in his theory of knowledge for a sophisticated form of innatism, in which what was innate was the very capacity of the mind to know and to process knowledge. Interestingly enough, Lady Masham, Knorr von Rosenroth, and Leibniz all believed that Locke accepted this form of innatism. Reacting to the same abridged version of Locke's *Essay* as Knorr, Lady Masham suggests that Locke's views are not really so different from her own and those of some of her friends, who believe the soul possesses "an Active Sagacitie" that allows it to evaluate the sensory information it receives. This was, of course, her father's opinion.⁷⁹

Knorr von Rosenroth's criticism was much the same, only couched in kabbalistic terms. Commenting specifically on book II, chapter 1 of the *Abregé*, he interprets Locke's statement about the two-fold source of ideas from sensation and reflection as supporting the existence of some innate "sixth sense," "internal vision," or "light" of the soul. For Knorr sensation "is of the man," or body, while "reflection" is of the "archeus," or vital spirit; in a word, reflection is a property of the mind or soul.⁸⁰

In his *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Leibniz also attributes to Locke the notion that knowledge comes from two distinct sources, experience and the mind itself, and he emphasizes his agreement with Locke on this essential point:

Someone will confront me with this accepted philosophical axiom, that there is nothing in the soul which does not come from the senses. But an exception must be made of the soul itself and its states. *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, excipe: nisi ipse intellectus.* Now the soul

⁷⁹ Lady Masham to Locke, 7 April 1688, *Correspondence*, 3:433–4.

⁸⁰ Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, "Observations on the *Abregé* of Locke's *Essay* (1688), *Correspondence*, 3:402–3.

includes being, substance, one, same, cause, perception, reasoning, and many other notions which the senses cannot provide. That agrees pretty well with your author of the *Essay*, for he looks for a good proportion of ideas in the mind's reflection on its own nature.⁸¹

Leibniz, of course, wanted to engage Locke in a dialogue and for this very purpose stressed their similarities. But if Robinet is correct in claiming that innate ideas get a more favorable reception in the fourth edition of Locke's *Essay*,⁸² it was perhaps as a result of criticisms such as these. Van Helmont's influence should not be discounted, as well, for he was a close friend of Knorr, Leibniz, Locke, and Lady Masham and, like them, he believed in innate ideas.⁸³

It is also important to point out that, for all their philosophical differences, Leibniz and Locke shared certain unorthodox religious views that were similar in many respects to those advocated by van Helmont. All three men rejected the doctrine of predestination and the eternity of hell. All three were committed to the idea that virtue and vice were almost entirely dependent on education which explains why they all rejected the concept of original sin and worked hard to promote educational reforms.⁸⁴ All three denied that Scripture was

⁸¹ P. Remnant, P. Bennett, and J. Bennett, translators and eds., *G. W. Leibniz, New Essays on Human Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Bk II, 1, p. 111.

⁸² A. Robinet, "La Réception du Système de Cudworth par G. W. Leibniz": "Lors de la reprise de contact avec Lady Masham, qui s'effectue en 1703, il est essentiellement question des *Nouveaux Essais*, en pleine genèse, et du *Système Intellectuel* qui, selon Leibniz ne peut être qu'opposé à Locke. Y aura-t-il à ce propos un impact de Leibniz sur Locke via Lady Masham et Cudworth, qui aurait conduit aux révisions du livre IV de *l'Essay*, bien plus favorable que les premières éditions à la théorie de l'innéité des idées?" Robinet discusses the originality of the fourth edition of the *Essay* and Locke's more favorable attitude towards innate ideas in Book IV in *Le Langage à l'âge classique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978), pp. 182-7.

⁸³ G. MacDonald Ross singles out Locke's discussion of intuitive knowledge (*Essay* IV, ii, 1, p. 531) as indicative of a reversion to the kind of innatism he so clearly denied in the first two books of the *Essay* ("Occultism and Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century," in A. J. Holland, ed., *Philosophy, Its History and Historiography* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985), p. 106: "This part of Knowledge is irresistible, and like the bright Sun-shine, forces it self immediately to be perceived, as soon as ever the Mind turns its view that way; and leaves no room for Hesitation, Doubt, or Examination, but the Mind is presently filled with the clear Light of it. 'Tis on this *Intuition*, that depends all the Certainty and Evidence of all our Knowledge, which Certainty every one finds to be so great, that he cannot imagine, and therefore not require a greater. . . ."

⁸⁴ In a letter to Edward Clark, in which he discusses the education of Clarke's son, Locke says he considers the boy "as white paper as a peice of wax to be moulded and fashond." Locke goes on to describe the cultivation of the rational faculty as "the highest perfection of a man" and one which "furnishes all the true

the only source of revelation. Most significantly, they all rejected Jesus' essential role in salvation. Orthodox Christians routinely dubbed any diminution in Christ's role as "Jewish" which helps to explain why van Helmont was imprisoned by the Roman Inquisition for two years on the charge of "Judaizing." The stigma of being a "judaizer" was also attached to Locke. He was accused of being, and probably was, as we have seen, a Socinian or Arian.⁸⁵ The Arian Jesus is far more like the Kabbalah's *Adam Kadmon* than the Christian Christ. He is the first among creatures and the mediator between God and man, but not in any way equal or consubstantial with the Father. The Christian Hebraist Constantine L'Empereur contemptuously referred to this view of Christ as a "Jewish" error. As he wrote, "Many people, even some who profess Christianity, do not shrink from frank approval of the Jewish error. They completely reject Christ's expiation for our sins."⁸⁶

As Richard Aaron has pointed out, Locke's extreme caution, his dislike of abstract, *a priori* systems, and the honesty which led him to admit arguments contrary to his own makes it difficult to give a consistently clear picture of his philosophy.⁸⁷ This may be the reason why historians have evaluated his work so differently. John Dunn, for example, rejects the general view of Locke as an optimistic thinker, arguing instead that he must be seen as a "tragic figure" because he came to realize that human reason is incapable of establishing a firm basis for morality.⁸⁸ Dunn considers Locke's legacy to be the Enlightenment and the legacy of the Enlightenment to be our modern world, which he regards as spiritually and morally adrift in unfathomable seas of conflicting ideologies. Hans Aarsleff takes a

light which our mindes can attein unto" (29 January/8 February, *Correspondence*, 2:789 and 790). Leibniz was equally convinced of the importance of education in promoting good morals. In his *Theodicy*, he gives the vivid example of twins separated at birth and subject to very different experiences to illustrate the way external circumstances and education shape one's intellectual and moral character [*Theodicy*, par. 101, p. 179, ed. E. M. Huggard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952)]. As we have seen, van Helmont spent a great deal of time devising projects to employ and educate people.

⁸⁵ Marshall, *John Locke*, pp. 131ff.

⁸⁶ Peter T. van Rooden, "Constintijn L'Empreur's Contacts with the Amsterdam Jews and his Confutation of Judaism," in J. van den Berg and E. van der Wall, eds., *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), p. 62.

⁸⁷ Aaron, *John Locke*, p. x.

⁸⁸ John Dunn, *John Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. vii.

completely different position. He considers Locke's philosophy the source of everything that is most positive about modernity: intellectual and religious freedom, individual autonomy, democracy, toleration, and the celebration of variety.⁸⁹ Which historian is right?

Locke's philosophy did make certainty that much harder to come by. The subtitle of Locke's last work against Stillingfleet reveals the troubling issues his ideas raised: "Wherein, besides other incident matters, what his Lordship has said concerning certainty by Reason, Certainty by Ideas, and Certainty by Faith; the Resurrection of the Body; the Immateriality of the Soul; the Inconsistency of Mr. Locke's Notions with the Articles of the Christian Faith, and their Tendency to Scepticism; is examined."⁹⁰ As Locke's critics, both contemporary and modern, have not failed to point out, his rejection of innate ideas, his caution about the perils of the misuse of language, and his recognition of the very real obstacles in the way of genuine scientific knowledge were all conducive to scepticism. The question is, was this skepticism constructive or deconstructive?⁹¹ Did it encourage open-minded investigation and rational discussion, the tolerance of different views, and the awareness that all knowledge is provisional? Or did it lead to incurable scepticism and anti-intellectualism?

It is difficult to accept Dunn's conclusion and to see Locke as "tragic." He may have become less optimistic in his old age; most people do. But he never gave up the idea that men had the necessary reasoning power to know what they needed to know and his increasing interest in education shows that he thought that some people, at least, could be taught to reason well.⁹² The object of his *Essay* was to discover the limits of human knowledge not in order to denigrate our abilities but to help us use them more wisely and productively. By revealing so clearly the potential pitfalls of language and the way our thought processes could be distorted and perverted by the misuse of words, Locke helped to foster a spirit of healthy

⁸⁹ Hans Aarsleff, "Locke's Influence," *Cambridge Companion to Locke*, pp. 252–89.

⁹⁰ Aarsleff makes this observation, *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁹¹ There is a debate about whether Locke should be put in the camp of constructive or negative skepticism. For the first, see H. G. van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought, 1630–1690* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963; 2nd ed. 1970), pp. 121 and 124, and Roger Woolhouse, *Locke* (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983), p. 14. For the second, see M. J. Ferreira, "Locke's 'Constructive Skepticism'—A Reappraisal," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24 (1986), pp. 211–22.

⁹² *Essay*, I, i, 5, p. 45.

skepticism, open-mindedness, and tolerance. Because human beings are incapable of reading God's mind, they should stop trying to do so and attend instead to what they can do to improve their own lot and the world around them. Candide's conclusion that it is best to cultivate one's own garden could well be applied to Locke. He was not a systemizer; he did not offer a key to truth and certainty. He was a humanist and a pragmatist, but nonetheless he did have a vision. In the passage he planned to add to Book III of the *Essay* about angelic knowledge, he expressly says that human beings have the power to come close to the kind of direct and certain knowledge possessed by angels. We should therefore be "ambitious to come . . . as near them as we can."⁹³ Such a statement is far closer to Pico della Mirandola than Luther.

There is more of heroism than tragedy in Locke's religious and intellectual journey. In significant ways the path which he followed was similar to that of van Helmont. While he had the courage to admit that neither he, nor anybody else, knew or could possibly know, all the answers, this view did not lead him to despair but to a call for renewed effort. What was necessary was perseverance, humility, tact, and, above all, broad-mindedness. As he said in a letter to van Limborch, "I, who seek everywhere truth alone, would with equal readiness receive it wherever found, whether among the heretics or the orthodox."⁹⁴ Van Helmont also described himself as a "Seeker," a stance that seemed to exhilarate rather than discourage him. For how many eighty-year-olds plan, as van Helmont did, to travel to India to consult the Brahmins, in the hope of obtaining new and better answers to life's great existential questions?⁹⁵

Locke's friendship with van Helmont was based on their shared curiosity and interest in the natural and human world. In a word, their friendship was born and cemented in their basic optimism. Tragic figures and pessimists do not generally devise experiments, invent practical devices to make life easier and more comfortable, or do everything in their power to encourage ecumenism and tolerance. Whatever the failures of the modern world may be, it would

⁹³ Quoted in Hans Aarselff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 79, note 62.

⁹⁴ Quoted in McLachlan, *The Religious Opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton*, p. 96.

⁹⁵ Furlly to Locke, 19/29 May 1694, *Correspondence*, 5:54-5.

be more accurate to attribute them to those who ignored Locke's conclusions about the limits of human understanding, claiming infallibility for themselves or their beliefs. It was this way of thinking that created to the horrendous conflicts of the Reformation. The same thinking fostered modern totalitarianism. If Locke's legacy is the Enlightenment, it is a glorious one because, at its best, the Enlightenment encouraged the kind of constructive skepticism that makes experimentation and reform possible.

JAMES E. FORCE

Conferring with Dick Popkin

Scholars research and write, then teach. All assessments of Dick Popkin—and all tributes to him as a teacher and all thanks to him for the wise and beneficent influence he has exercised upon so many young people—must begin by acknowledging what he has accomplished as a researcher and a writer. John Rogers precisely sums up Dick Popkin's contribution when he writes that Dick's great work, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, "has added a whole dimension to the way the modern world is understood, both as to its origins and nature."¹ Since its first publication (as *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* by Van Gorcum in 1960), this seminal work—and the massive array of articles which by now encrust it, the result of Dick's uncanny historical sleuthing in the remotest research libraries of Europe and America—has been the single indispensable starting point for everyone who studies the early modern era. Dick himself still starts from this datum and the generations of scholars who cut their teeth on the first edition eagerly await *The History of Scepticism from Savonarola to Pierre Bayle's Article on "Savonarola"* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 1999). Could this momentous event possibly signify the opening of the vital seventh seal (Rev. 8:1) or possibly even herald the victory over Satan (Rev. 20:7–10)? Perhaps time, as Newton cautioned, may connect these dots.

Dick's latter day career has developed in a most distinctive and typically generous fashion. In the past fifteen years or so, Dick has extended his influence within the Republic of Letters, if that is possible, by organizing topically focused congresses of eminent scholars. Conferences, it must be noted, are not always good things. In 1994, Camille Paglia provocatively argued that:

¹ G. A. J. Rogers, "Popkin, Scepticism, and the History of Modern Philosophy," *infra*.

In the past twenty years, conferences became the infernal engine driving the academic profession. The conference crowd, an international party circuit of literary luminaries ever on the move, was put together by the new humanities centers. These programs had the initially laudable aim of fostering interdisciplinary exchanges outside the repressive framework of the conservative, static and over-tenured university departments. . . . The humanities centers quickly became careerist stockyards, where greedy speculation and insider trading were as much the rules of the game as on Wall Street.

Quieter, more traditional academics were outmaneuvered by the conference crowd, and scholarship was the victim.²

In contrast with the torturous modern day meat-markets of the professional societies where too many Ph.D.s chase too few jobs or, especially, with the peripatetic trendies roasted by Paglia (and first skewered by David Lodge in *Small World*), the small conferences which Dick has been at such pains to organize have been models of true collegiality and traditional scholarship. Dick's efforts as one of the premier, independent organizers of international scholarly conclaves over the past decade have shown that there is still a place for substantive conferences where traditional scholars confer with one another about their work in quiet isolation from careerist opportunism and in an atmosphere illuminated by Dick's singular combination of humility and genius. These genuinely excellent conferences have been, remarkably enough for a scholar whose published work is deservedly ranked with the greatest scholars of this century, one of Dick's greatest scholarly achievements. Through his work in conference and seminar organizing over the last fifteen years, he has been responsible for revitalizing and reinvigorating a wide variety of important areas of intellectual history while simultaneously redefining what a scholarly conference, at its best, can and ought to be.

In November, 1994, David Katz and I invited some of the people who have "conferred" with Dick—his conferences are as much consultations as individual presentations—to present to him a volume of essays celebrating this vitally important, but easily overlooked, aspect of his marvelous career and legacy. We simply wanted posterity to know of this shining, if too brief, moment in the history of

² Camille Paglia, "The Nursery-School Campus: The Corrupting of the Humanities in the U.S.," in *Vamps and Tramps: New Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 101.

scholarship. The essays in this volume may, or may not, "connect" but if anyone could connect them it would be Dick Popkin. I can easily envision him doing so now at a conference he has organized (in Wasenaar or London or, especially, in the Clark Library) during one of his remarkable, extemporaneous, self-deprecating, and graceful opening speeches or keynote addresses. Indeed, Dick Popkin, at a podium before those who aspire merely to become his peers but whom he graciously and modestly acknowledges as his equals, is one of my fondest images of him. It ranks right up there with watching him, on any April 15th, file frantically for income tax extensions or, on any other day, gut a library the way an expert angler rips the viscera out of a fish.

In January of 1982, shortly after John Rogers had departed the Clark Library for England and home, I traversed the American west in my 1969 Buick Electra convertible to join what John refers to as the Popkin "seminars."³ I regard the year of Dick's first Clark Professorship in 1981-2 as "The Miraculous Year."⁴ How lucky I am to have observed Dick closely in his true spiritual homeland, a first-class scholarly research library. "Sam" Fisher was then his latest enthusiasm and, over cake in the lounge, he regaled us with fascinating stories and daring, startling connections between that long-dead Quaker theorist and other books and ideas. I am sure that they still must be scraping bits of "Sam" Fisher off the walls of Dick's carrell at the Clark. I had seen him eviscerate great libraries before—e.g., during his flying visits to the North Library at the old British Library in the British Museum during my student days (1975-5)—but it is at the Clark, during that Miraculous Year, in the informal "seminars" in the lounge, with ideas and cake crumbs flying, or in the lectures upstairs during the conferences which he organized as Clark Professor,⁵ that I will always choose to remember him.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without mentioning Julie Popkin whom I regard as one of the kindest, most intelligent people it

³ Rogers, "Popkin, Scepticism, and the History of Modern Philosophy," *infra*.

⁴ During 1997-8, Dick was once again honored as The Clark Professor and planned the most ambitious series of conferences and lectures yet.

⁵ The Clark Lectures from this Miraculous Year have been published. See Richard H. Popkin, ed., *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Thought, 1650-1800* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

has ever been my pleasure to call my friend. She is a remarkable person composed of equal parts of razor-sharp intellect and good will. Together, Dick and Julie have composed a great academic team and given rise to a wonderful family. All the rest—the books, the conferences, the worldly recognition—is merely icing on the real cake.

“CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION” AND “CHILDREN OF THE DUST”: CONFRONTING MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY WITH NEWTON AND HUME

James E. Force

Section 1: Introduction

In a classic discussion of David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural and Revealed Religion*, R. H. Hurlbutt elaborates Norman Kemp Smith's passing remark that Cleanthes' scientific theism must be identified as much with "the contemporary users of the design argument" as with Cicero's Stoic statement of the design argument in *De Natura Deorum*.⁶ According to Hurlbutt, the design argument, as it is put forward by Cleanthes, represents:

the kind of theology developed by Sir Isaac Newton and his followers. (This theology in turn represents the attempt to exploit the new science, both as a method and as a body of factual and theoretical knowledge, in support of the Christian Religion . . .).⁷

The tendency to read Newton exclusively as a design theorist leads to an overly rationalistic Newton, a Newton whose religious views are adequately represented solely by the design argument. As such, Newton's theology reduces to an equivocal latitudinarianism or even to the sort of sceptical deism whose rationalism must inevitably subvert religious faith.⁸ Many recent and sophisticated workers in the

⁶ See Robert H. Hurlbutt, III, *Hume, Newton, and the Design Argument* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 137.

⁷ Hurlbutt, *Hume, Newton, and the Design Argument*, p. 137. Hurlbutt's identification of the modern element of Cleanthes' "scientific theism" with that developed by "Newton and his followers" is correct. The echo between Cleanthes' statement of the design argument in Part II of the *Dialogues* and Newton's own clear statement of the design argument in the "General Scholium" to the second edition of the *Principia* (1713) is clear and unmistakable. Florian Cajori, ed., *Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and His System of the World*, trans. into English by Andrew Motte in 1729, the translations revised by Florian Cajori, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), 2:544.

⁸ James E. Force, "Sir Isaac Newton, 'Gentlemen of Wide Swallow'?: Newton

"Newtonian industry"⁹ still share Hurlbutt's explicit assumption that Newton's characteristic theory of the nature of the Lord God of dominion, though perhaps "important" to Newton psychologically and despite being expressly declared within the province of natural philosophy, contains no necessary connection with Newton's conception of the "frame of the world."¹⁰

Such interpreters prise the main body of the *Principia* apart from both the design argument of the "General Scholium" and the scripturally based theology which Newton devoted so much time to perfecting in his voluminous unpublished manuscripts. On this interpretation, Newton's theology, for various biological or psychological reasons—e.g., because of senility or because of an awareness of his own approaching death¹¹—is viewed as logically and historically disconnected from Newton's method in natural philosophy.

and the Latitudinarians," in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), pp. 119–42. James E. Force, "The Newtonians and Deism," in Force and Popkin, *Essays*, pp. 43–74.

⁹ Richard S. Westfall, "The Changing World of the Newtonian Industry," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Jan.–March, 1976), p. 175n: "While production of Newtoniana is not confined to a cartel, a fairly small group dominates the industry in quantity. They constitute a claustrophobic and neurotic society, the members of which circle one another warily, jockeying for position. . . ."

¹⁰ John Herman Randall, Jr., "What Isaac Newton Started," the Introduction in *Newton's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. H. S. Thayer, 2nd ed. (New York: Hafner Press, 1974), pp. xi–xii. See, too, Gale E. Christianson, *In the Presence of the Creator. Isaac Newton and His Times* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), pp. 312–3; Frank E. Manuel, *The Changing of the Gods* (Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 1983), p. 15; Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), passim, but especially p. 49; and Richard S. Westfall, "Newton's Theological Manuscripts," in *Contemporary Newtonian Research*, ed. Zev Bechler (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1987), pp. 139–40.

¹¹ The first and most influential interpreter to attribute Newton's interest in theology to a mental breakdown and, hence, to remove his natural philosophy beyond an intellectual "cordon sanitaire" where it was uncontaminated by his theology was Jean-Baptiste Biot. In the 1830's, Biot relied upon a newly discovered note by Christian Huygens according to which Newton became deranged around 1692–4 when his dog tipped over a candle causing a fire in which all his writings from the preceding twenty years burned. According to Biot, Newton never recovered the full use of his mental faculties which precipitated a turn from science to theology. See Richard H. Popkin, "Newton and Fundamentalism, II," in Force and Popkin, *Essays*, p. 165. The most recent interpreter to attribute Newton's switch from "serious" science to radically speculative theology to advancing age, with its special awareness of mortality, is Rupert Hall, *Isaac Newton. Adventurer in Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), p. 374, who writes that "Perhaps it was inevitable that the imagination which in youth was fertile and original in comprehending the natural world by means of experiment and mathematics should seem so banal, in old age particularly, when facing the imponderables of mortality and immortality."

I have always argued, in contrast, that Newton's cautious empiricism is the result of his providentialist voluntarism in theology. Newton's epistemological method in natural philosophy is not the triumphant expression of rational doubt about the ability of human reason to attain certainty.¹² Newton's experimentally grounded inductivism and his view that the ultimate reality of things exceed human grasp results from his core theological belief that the whole of nature is subordinate to what he terms the "Lord God" and is "subservient to His will."¹³ Newton would be astonished to learn that so many of his modern interpreters have claimed that his epistemology must simply be disconnected from his theology thereby reducing him to a deistic harbinger of scientific secularism. Newton's theology extends far beyond Cleanthes' design argument in Hume's *Dialogues* and the natural inference to a generally provident creator-designer.

In this paper, I seek to accomplish three goals. First, I intend to analyze how—for Newton—fulfilled Biblical prophecies illustrate that the Lord God of creation has continued to act directly through specially provident, miraculous, acts in the past and that this record of divine intervention gives Newton good reason to believe in the future fulfillment of such prophetic visions as the apocalyptic events described in the Book of Revelation.¹⁴ In Newton's time, deists, latitudinarians, conformists, Catholics, and dissenters all adopt the view that, in the beginning, God created heaven, earth, and the laws of nature by an act of generally provident sovereign will. Within this widely accepted theology of a generally provident creator/architect, a deity accepted even by deists,¹⁵ there is great disagreement in Newton's

¹² Henry G. Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought, 1630–1690* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 106–20.

¹³ Isaac Newton, *Opticks, or a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections & Colours of Light*, based upon the fourth edition London, 1730 (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), Query 31, p. 403.

¹⁴ I delivered this paper, as it is written, at a conference in Paris in 1994 one, ironically, not organized by Dick Popkin. Much of what I say here in Section 1 of this paper, in comparing and contrasting Hume and Newton, I said first in my article entitled "Newton's 'Sleeping Argument' and the Newtonian Synthesis of Science and Religion," in *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants. A Longer View of Newton and Halley* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 109–27, or in my article entitled "Hume and the Relation of Science to Religion Among Certain Members of the Royal Society," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45, No. 4 (Oct.–Dec., 1984), pp. 517–36 [which I revised and published as "The Breakdown of the Newtonian Synthesis of Science and Religion: Hume, Newton, and the Royal Society," in Force and Popkin, *Essays* (1990), pp. 143–63].

¹⁵ William Whiston claims that it is the very success of Newtonian natural

time about precisely how, to what extent, or even whether the creator/architect has continuously intervened in his created natural order in history and about whether he will ever do so again—as Newton believes God will do in yet unfulfilled future prophecies.¹⁶ This debate about the nature and extent of a continuous and continuing “special” divine providence, in contrast to God’s one-of-a-kind act of “general” providence at the creation revealed in the evidence of design, is the central concern for Newton in his theological speculations about what properly understood prophecies reveal about the nature of God.¹⁷ Newton is committed to a voluntaristic Lord God who is simultaneously generally provident—as revealed by the design argument of “natural” religion—and specially provident—as revealed

philosophy in underpinning the design argument, even for deists, which has caused the deists scornfully to deny revealed religion. Whiston writes:

... as to *Deism*, or the Denial of the Scripture, and of Divine Revelation, it is really *Ill mens last Refuge*, and taken up of late, not by honest Enquirers, impartially searching after Truth and discovering upon Evidence, that all Revealed Religion is false; but that it is chiefly fallen into of late, by some Irreligious Persons, in the Distress of their Affairs, and upon that surprizing and overbearing Light, which Sir *Isaac Newton's* wonderful discoveries have afforded; whereby they have perceived that Natural Religion, with its Foundations, were now become too certain to bear any farther Opposition. That this is true, I appeal to a certain Club of Persons, not over-religiously dispos'd, who being soberly asked, after Dr. *Bentley's* remarkable Sermons at Mr. Boyle's Lectures, built upon Sir *Isaac Newton's* Discoveries, and level'd against the prevailing Atheism of the Age, *What they had to say in their own Vindication against the Evidence produc'd by Dr. Bentley?* The Answer was, *That truly they did not well know what to say against it, upon the Head of Atheism: But what, say they, is this to the fable of Jesus Christ?* And in Confirmation of this Account, it may, I believe, be justly observ'd, the present gross *Deism*, or the Opposition that has of late so evidently and barefacedly appear'd against Divine Revelation, and the Holy scriptures, has taken its Date in some Measure from that time. [William Whiston, *Astronomical Principles of Religion, Natural and Reveal'd* (London, 1717), pp. 242–3].

¹⁶ On the Puritan view of providence, which derives directly from Calvin's *Institutes*, see Barbara Donagan, “Providence, Chance and Explanation: Some Paradoxical Aspects of Puritan Views of Causation,” *Journal of Religious History* (1982) and Margo Todd, “Providence, Chance and the New Science in Early Stuart Cambridge,” *The Historical Journal* 29, No. 3 (1986), pp. 697–711. On Anglican and Puritan modifications of Calvin's basic doctrine, see Ronald J. VanderMolen, “Providence as Mystery, Providence as Revelation: Puritan and Anglican Modifications of John Calvin's Doctrine of Providence,” *Church History* (1978), pp. 27–47.

¹⁷ This seminal distinction of two subspecies within the broad concept of divine providence appears in the modern period in *De Veritate* (Paris, 1624), p. 213, by Lord Herbert of Cherbury. He is rightfully regarded as one of the founders of the deist movement because, after distinguishing between the two types of providence, he eliminates special providence as revealed in scripture. At least, he lays down such stringent rules for authenticating such reports that the Bible is virtually excluded as a source of knowledge about God.

by the "sleeping argument" of Newton's interpretation of Biblical prophecy.¹⁸ Finally, an examination of Newton's view of apocalyptic prophecies furthers our understanding of the implications of his ardent providentialism for his empirical probabilism in natural philosophy in addition to helping us to fathom Newton's motivation in becoming a Biblical exegete. Newton's complete theology is simply not reducible to the design argument (uttered by a literary character in Hume's *Dialogues*) or the result of his own advancing age.

Second, once I have illustrated the profoundly providentialist nature of Newton's complete and complex theology in his synthesis of the design argument and the argument from prophecy (and described its consequences for Newton's providentialist views regarding nature, man, and the church), I will contrast Newton's thoroughgoing providentialism with Hume's gleeful reintroduction of Epicurus' atheistic materialism which Hume considers to be a serious possible explanation of the apparent order in the universe even if it is only faintly "probable" in comparison to the design hypothesis.

Third, and finally, I will conclude with a case study of the implications of Newton's providentialist voluntarism and Hume's religious scepticism for their own personal attitudes in the face of imminent death. As each faces an inevitable terminal illness, their contrasting philosophical positions lead to dramatically different theoretical expectations. No other single aspect of their thought better reveals the futility of separating Newton's science from his climactic expectations regarding the "future state" or of Hume's humanely ironic nobility. Newton hopes that he belongs to what he calls the "children of the resurrection" while Hume is not sure but thinks it possible that his soul will be simply annihilated and return to the dust from whence, by chance, it sprang.

¹⁸ Newton's "distinctiveness" ought not to be overemphasized. He certainly echoes a key distinction developed by medieval nominalists such as Pierre d'Ailly in his emphasis upon God's absolute power. For the medieval background to the distinction between God's "general" providence (as exhibited at the time of creation) and God's continuing ability to intervene through an act of omnipotent "special" providence, see Francis Oakley, *Omnipotence, Covenant, & Order: An Excursion in the History of Ideas from Abelard to Leibniz* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 67-92, and William J. Courtenay, "Covenant and Causality in Pierre d'Ailly," *Speculum* 46 (1971), pp. 94-119. On Newton's relation to this tradition, see Oakley, "Christian Theology and the Newtonian Science: The Rise of the Concept of the Laws of Nature," *Church History* 30, No. 4 (1961), pp. 433-57. Recently, Stephen Snobelen has made some exciting connections between Newton's theology and the context of Socinianism. See his "Isaac Newton and Socinianism: Associations with a Greater Heresy," in *Enlightenment and Dissent* (forthcoming).

*Section 2: Understanding Newton's Lord God of Dominion in the
Context of Newton's Method in Natural Philosophy*

In his "Rules for Methodizing the Apocalypse," Newton describes Rule 9 for interpreting millennial and apocalyptic language in Biblical prophecies. The exegete must:

... choose those constructions which, without straining, reduce things to the greatest simplicity. ... Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things. As the world, which to the naked eye exhibits the greatest variety of objects, appears very simple in its internal constitution when surveyed by a philosophic understanding, and so much the simpler, the better it is understood, so it is in these visions. It is the perfection of all God's works that they are done with the greatest simplicity.

The next sentence in Rule 9 is the most crucial point of connection between the rational methodology of Newton's empirical method—one aspect of which is to reveal in the design of nature a creator "well-skilled in geometry"—and the realm of fulfilled prophecies. Newton's God is supremely:

the God of order and not confusion. And therefore as they that would understand the frame of the world must endeavor to reduce their knowledge to all possible simplicity, so must it be in seeking to understand these [prophetic] visions.¹⁹

Just as God has left the impression of his attributes of generally provident power and omnipotence on physical creation in the "book" of nature, so too he has revealed abundant evidence of his specially provident intercession in his created natural order to be found in

¹⁹ Newton, Yahuda Ms. 1.1, reprinted in Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, p. 120. Newton's Rule 9 in his "Rules for Methodizing Scripture" clearly echoes the famous "principle of simplicity" with regard to physical phenomena stated in Rule 1 of the second edition of the *Principia*. Cf. Richard Olson, *Science Deified & Science Defied. The Historical Significance of Science in Western Culture*, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982–90), 2:125, where Olson argues that Newton's utilization in this passage of the "principle of simplicity" shows the extent to which he "depended on 'metaphysical' principles of the kind Newton found so repugnant when they were expressed by Leibniz." For a slightly different interpretation of the meaning of the "principle of simplicity," especially as expressed in Rule 1 of the "Rules of Reasoning" in the second edition of the *Principia*, see James E. Force, "Newton's God of Dominion: The Unity of Newton's Theological, Scientific, and Political Thought," in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, *Essays*, pp. 83–90.

properly interpreted scripture.²⁰ Newton (and such Newtonians as Clarke and Whiston) believe in "miracles," a term they use in two senses. First, God's continuous act of preserving the natural world is itself an instance of special providence. Second, when pressed by Leibniz about their reduction of God to the status of an inferior clock repairman or when considering scriptural reports of phenomena for which there is no apparent (or conceivable) mechanical explanation, they accept, however reluctantly, standard miraculous accounts and view them as proof of God's directly interactive special providence. Finally, God's dominion is not limited to that of a purely creative deity active once long ago. Newton seeks to understand the scriptural prophecies regarding the Day of Judgement and the nature of the prophesied millennial kingdom to come as an act of pious scholarship devoted to tracing out God's specially provident, continuous, even miraculous, involvement in his creation.²¹ Newton is a premillennialist²² who believes that the second coming of Christ will

²⁰ William Whiston sums up the Newtonian view of God's providence, so perfectly illustrated in the above text, when he describes the task of the Newtonian biblical scholar:

Since it has now pleased God, as we have seen, to discover many noble and important truths to us, by the Light of Nature, and the System of the World; as also, he has long discovered many noble and important Truths by Revelation, in the Sacred Truths; It cannot be now improper, to compare these two Divine Volumes, as I may well call them, together; in such Cases, I mean of Revelation, as related to the Natural World, and wherein we may be assisted the better to judge by the knowledge of the System of the Universe about us. For if those things contained in Scriptures be true, and really deriv'd from the Author of Nature, we shall find them, in proper Cases, confirm'd by the System of the World and the Frame of Nature will in some Degree, bear Witness to the Revelation. (William Whiston, *Astronomical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revel'd*, p. 133).

²¹ Again, Newton explicitly derives the doctrines which constitute his idiosyncratic Christianity from his own literal reading of scripture. Newton writes that:

We are commanded by the Apostle (1 Tim 1.13) *to hold fast the form of sound words*. Contending for a language which was not handed down from the Prophets and Apostles is a breach of the command and they that break it are also guilty of the disturbances and schisms occasioned thereby. It is not enough to say that an article of faith may be deduced from scripture. It must be express in the very form of sound words in which it was delivered by the Apostles. Otherwise there can be no lasting fixity nor peace of the Church catholic. For men are apt to vary, dispute, and run into partings about deductions. All the old Heresies lay in deductions; the true faith was in the text. (Newton, *Yahuda Ms. 15.1*, fol. 11r. Cited in Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, pp. 54–5).

²² See James E. Force, "Millennialism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Enlightenment*, ed. John Yolton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 331–2.

precede his thousand-year reign on earth. In Newton's view, following the ruin of the wicked nations, following the "end of weeping and of all troubles," and following the "return of the Jews," then Christ will return for his millennial reign. And, then, Newton writes that:

In the Apocalyps where tis said that they bring the glory and honour of the nations into the new Jerusalem those nations are certainly mortals, for they are the nations whom the Dragon deceived no more till the thousand years expired and who being at the end of those years again deceived by him did compass the beloved city and were devoured by fire from the throne, that is by war. Thus is there an end of those rebellious nations but not of the beloved city. . . . The state of this new Jerusalem you may see further described in Isa. 60 namely how it is a city of mortals assembled from captivity and rules over the nations and *continues for ever* and how (as in the Apocalyps) the Gentiles come to her light and the Kings to the brightness of her rising and her gates are open continually that . . . they may bring unto her the riches of the Gentiles and *the Sun is no more her light by day nor the moon, but the Lord her everlasting light.*²³

During the initial millennium of Christ's reign in the New Jerusalem (which will, after all, continue "*for ever*"), Newton literally believes that, in addition to the ordinary mortals who compose it, there will be interspersed "children of the Resurrection."

For Newton, then, the millennial New Jerusalem is the inheritance of the mortals then alive and individually resurrected saints specifically chosen by God to help Christ rule during the millennium. During Christ's initial thousand years of dominion over this earth and the New Jerusalem, the earth will be at peace in a manner unknown since the primeval paradise of Eden. Newton goes on to describe the interaction of the immortal "children of the resurrection" with the mortals who share their abode during the millennium in most striking terms:

. . . we are not to conceive that Christ and the Children of the resurrection shall reign over [mortals] the nations after the manner of mortal Kings or convers with mortals as mortals do with one another; but rather as Christ after his resurrection continued for some time on earth

²³ Newton, *The Synchronisms of the Three parts of the Prophetick Interpretation*, "Of the [world to come], Day of Judgment and World to come," published as Appendix B in Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, pp. 126-8. I have emphasized the phrase "*continues for ever*" and "*the Sun is no more her light by day nor the moon, but the Lord is her everlasting light*" because they illustrate how this earth, once it becomes a wandering comet, will still be illuminated as prophesied.

invisible to mortals unless [when] upon certain occasions when he thought fit to appear to [mortals] his disciples; so it is to be conceived that at his second coming he and the children of the resurrection shall reign invisibly unless they shall think fit upon any extraordinary occasions to appear. And as Christ after some stay in or neare the regions of this earth ascended into heaven so after the resurrection of the dead it may be in their power [also] to leave this earth at pleasure and accompany him into any part of the heavens, that no region in the whole Univers may want its inhabitants.²⁴

At the end of this thousand year reign of Christ (with his specially chosen, individually resurrected assistants, the Children of the Resurrection), Satan will rise up from his pit and make apocalyptic war. Satan's final defeat will be followed by the general resurrection of martyrs and saints not resurrected for the millennium, i.e., those who "sleep in the dust,"²⁵ and the day of judgment. Newton writes:

For when the Martyrs and Prophets live again they may reign here with Christ a thousand years till all the nations Gog and Magog be subdued and the dominion of the new Jerusalem be established and death be vanquished by raising the rest of the dead (**those who do not live again untill [the end of] the thousand years be finished**), . . .²⁶

So much for Newton's understanding of the nature of the Lord God, a deity who is inferred rationally on the basis of design as a generally provident creator/architect and revealed in scripture as a specially providential deity who willfully suspends natural laws for his own purposes. Now, what, one may legitimately ask, do Newton's intensely private musings about the Lord God who will, at some point, providentially set in train the Revelation scenario, have to do with Newton's method in natural philosophy or with his expectations of what that method can achieve? Are not the scientific portions of the *Principia* still valid even if Newton embeds them in his fervent millennial expectations, especially those regarding the "future state" of the "chidren of the resurrection? Given how Newton

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 135–6.

²⁵ Newton is a psychopannychist who does not believe that the soul maintains a continuously conscious existence after the death of the body. See James E. Force, "The God of Abraham and Isaac (Newton)," in *The Books of Nature and Scripture: Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy, Theology, and Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands of Spinoza's Time and the British Isles of Newton's Time*, eds. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1994), pp. 179–200.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

understands the power and dominion of the Lord God,²⁷ Newton's metaphysical theology interacts with his scientific epistemology just as it does with all other elements of his thought.²⁸

Because of God's sovereign nature as "Lord God," the laws of nature are, in an important sense, *both* necessary and contingent. They are necessary *only* while God, who created them, maintains them in operation. Newton is no enthusiast and he labors mightily to separate the few cases of genuine historical (often catastrophic) miracles from the many cases of idolatrous and false ones.²⁹

Nevertheless, Newton accepts the reality of direct divine intervention in nature through miraculous ("specially provident") acts of will (which are simultaneously supremely acts of power) which interrupt the ordinary coursing of nature and nature's generally provident laws and his reading of prophecy leads him to expect a "new

²⁷ Here again, I must emphasize my difference with Frank E. Manuel and Richard S. Westfall. In his pioneering examination of Newton's hitherto little known theological manuscripts, Manuel rightly insists that Newton achieves, in his private thought, an "intimate union of science and religion." See Frank E. Manuel, *The Changing of the Gods*, p. 15. See, too, Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, passim, and p. 49. However, in explaining the nature of this union, Manuel emphasizes that—in his view—it is Newton's scientific rationality which affects Newton's approach to interpreting biblical prophecies. The tests of truth in biblical interpretation, as in scientific demonstration, are "constancy and consistency." See Manuel, *The Changing of the Gods*, p. 23. Westfall also concludes that Newton brings the rigorous standards of scientific demonstration to the interpretation of biblical prophecies. One scholar who disagrees with Westfall's thesis that Newton's religion is influenced by his science is William H. Austin, "Isaac Newton on Science and Religion," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31 (1970). Both Manuel and Westfall agree that it is primarily Newton's science, or his scientific rationality, which influences his theology and not his theology which influences his science. Westfall explicitly finds it "more likely to find the flow of influence moving from science, the rising enterprise, toward theology, the old and (as we know from hindsight) fading one." See Richard S. Westfall, "Newton's Theological Manuscripts," in *Contemporary Newtonian Research*, pp. 139–40.

²⁸ Newton's literal, even Mosaic, conception of God's dominion and power cannot be, for Newton, simply divorced from the empiricist epistemology which he adopts in his empirically grounded scientific method but is entirely consonant with it. Henry Guerlac's description of Newton's *probatio duplex* illustrates that, for Newton, even the best scientific knowledge which his method provides is limited to the current nature of things and is, necessarily, dependent upon the absolute will and power of the Lord God for its original being and continued operation. See Henry Guerlac, "Newton and the Method of Analysis," in *Essays and Papers in the History of Modern Science* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), pp. 193–216. (This paper was first published as an article in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* in 1973).

²⁹ Newton, "Paradoxical questions concerning y^e morals & actions of Athanasius & his followers," William Andrews Clark Memorial Library Ms., University of California, Los Angeles.

heaven and a new earth" when the laws and principles of the current system may no longer apply. For Newton, the primacy of God's power results in a distinctive contingency in the natural order even while Newton acknowledges the virtual necessity of that order in its ordinary ("generally provident") current operation and provides a rational method for studying its operation. For Newton, the whole of creation is "subordinate to [God], and subservient to his Will."³⁰ This is the theological and metaphysical background to Newton's most famous methodological statement in his fourth "Rule" of reasoning:

In experimental philosophy we are to look upon propositions inferred by general induction from phenomena as accurately or very nearly true, notwithstanding any contrary hypotheses that may be imagined, till such time as other phenomena occur, by which they may either be made more accurate, or liable to exceptions.

This rule we must follow, that the argument of induction may not be evaded by hypotheses.³¹

Modern historians of science have eagerly found in this epistemological injunction to proceed empirically, while eschewing the goal of absolute certainty, good reason to disconnect Newton's epistemology from his theology. They have seen in this text the triumph of modern, mitigated scepticism in natural philosophy. I answer that Newton's universe is *not*, and for Newton can *never* be, "stripped of "metaphysical considerations" because its creator, owner, and operator is the Lord God of Israel. Fifty years prior to Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, Newton, from a vastly different metaphysical and theological starting point, argues emphatically that the future need not resemble the past simply because of the Lord God's absolute power to change natural law and that, consequently, we must mark all the consequences of this fact in regulating our expectations about what sort of human knowledge scientific empiricism can provide. As Newton understands them, natural laws and mechanisms work, in general for now, but, in the millennium and beyond, the "children of the resurrection" will live in a "new heaven" and a "new earth" where the former natural laws need not apply if the Lord God so chooses.

Newton's motivation in synthesizing revealed and natural religion with natural philosophy in this particular fashion is the most fascinating part of his theology. Newton's attitude to his own Biblical

³⁰ Sir Isaac Newton, *Opticks*, p. 403.

³¹ Sir Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 2:400. This rule is not added to the *Principia* until the second edition of 1713.

exegesis derives from his own enormous success in explicating the orderliness of the providential "frame of the world." In his manuscript entitled the *Irenicum*, Newton is explicit about the nature of "true," in contrast to "apostate," Christian doctrine. Newton fixes three essential elements of true Christian doctrine: renunciation of the devil; forsaking the devil; and belief in the ONE God, "the father, almighty in dominion. . . ."³² Newton calls these doctrines "the foundation & first principles of the doctrines of Christ. . . ."³³

Beyond this crucial core of apostolically correct doctrine, described as "milk for babes," only a learned, wise, mature scholar, a true adept who has mastered the languages and studied the sources, ought to seek to perfect his understanding of the most problematic sacred texts:

since strong meats are not fit for babes, but are to given only to men of riper years, they were not to be imposed on all men, but only to be learnt by such as after admission into communion are able to learn them.³⁴

In the spirit of Christian charity, tolerant disagreements over the meaning of these more advanced and obscure doctrines is possible.³⁵

³² King's College, Cambridge, Keynes Ms. 3, f. 9r.

³³ *Ibid.*, f. 11r.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Exactly what constitutes the list of doctrines which constitute "strong meats for men of full age" is made plain by Newton in one of his many manuscript histories of the church. In the manuscript "On the Church" (in "Chap. II. Of the holy Covenant," Ms. f. 40r) which is owned by the Martin Bodmer Foundation in Geneva, Newton writes that:

Besides the fundamental points of faith wch all men were to learn before baptism, & wch the Apostle therefore compares to milk for babes there are in the scriptures many truths of great importance to be learnt afterward. And these the Apostle compares to strong meats for men of full age who by use have their senses exercised to discern both good & evil. With these truths the mind is to be fed continually as the body is with meats. And to these truths referr what Christ did before his incarnation, & between his death & resurrection, what he doth (f. 41r) now in heaven how the saints shall reign with him as Kings & Priests at his second coming & rule the nations with a rod of iron & what he or they shall do after the day of judgment, as also all disputable questions about Providence, Predestination, Free-Will, Grace, the origin of evil, the nature of Gods justice & of the satisfaction made by Christ, the nature of Angels the state of the dead between death & resurrection the [nature of] bodies wth wch the dead shall arise, the power of the keys, forms of the Church government, the keeping of Easter & other holy days & the like. About such things we are to believe the scriptures, to learn all that we can out of them & to instruct one another, but not to fall out amongst our selves. We must

But what Newton describes as "disputable questions," i.e., questions which are legitimate grounds for tolerant and friendly debate among adept scholars, must *not* be confused with his exceptionally clear descriptions of the mandatory foundations and first principles of "true" Christianity in which Christ derives his power and being from the one "Lord God." Newton is unrelentingly intolerant of *all* who embrace "Satan" through *any* form of idolatry. Christians of Newton's almost Judaized stamp, i.e., true Christians who obey utterly the "first and great commandment," *must* absolutely "believe in One God, the father Almighty in dominion." Jesus Christ is important. But Jesus' sacrifice, promised future return, and inevitable judgement both of the quick and those raised from the dead, is ordained by the "Lord God" who possesses absolute dominion and sovereignty over Jesus as well as the rest of creation. Anyone who deviates even fractionally from this unrelenting monotheism is "accursed."³⁶

Newton unequivocally asserts that for an entire Christian Church to forsake the *one* true God by idolatrously divinizing Christ:

... is a breach of the first & greatest commandment. It is giving to idols the love, honour & worship wch is due to the true God alone. It is forsaking the true God to commit whoredome with other lovers. It makes a Church guilty of apostasy from God, as an Adultress forsakes her husband. It makes her become the Church of the idols, fals Gods or Daemons whom she worships, such a Church as in Scripture is called a Synagoge of Satan.³⁷

At a stroke, Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism become, for Newton, the Synagogues of Satan because of their idolatrous trinitarianism. Standing against them is the Biblical exegete, Isaac Newton, who, utilizes his "rules" for "methodizing" Biblical prophecies to reveal the nature of the Lord God and his "true" doctrine" for the "edification" of the "Remnant" of the true Church, that "remnant" who now correctly understand the prophecies in these "latter times into wch we are fallen. . . ." After all, Newton declares, these prophecies are "intended for our use that in the midst of Apostasies we

not impose consequences of scripture but keep to the language of the scripture itself, & bear with one anothers interpretations thereof. [For imposing of consequences leads to wrangling discord & schism, & puts the true Church upon a level in disputing with wrangling hereticks].

³⁶ Keynes Ms. 3, f. 13r.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

might be able to discern the truth and be established in the faith thereof. . . .”³⁸

Newton sees himself, I believe, in the context of the conflict described in the Book of Revelation, Chapter 12, between true Christianity, represented by Jesus Christ (properly interpreted as an important agent of the Lord God but not idolatrously regarded as either consubstantial or co-eternal with the Lord God), and Christ’s conflict with Satan, represented by the Dragon in verse 17 where the dragon made war on the “remnant” of the primitive and true church, i.e., “those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.” Newton imparts his constructions of various problematic texts to a trusted few. Newton writes that not everyone will understand his interpretations of prophetic doctrine but:

If they are never to be understood, to what end did God reveale them? Certainly he did it for y^e edification of y^e church; and if so, then it is as certain y^t y^e church shall at length attain to y^e understanding thereof. I mean not all that call themselves Christians but a remnant, a few scattered persons which God hath chosen, such as without being led by interest, education, or humane authorities, can set themselves sincerely & earnestly to search after truth. For as Daniel hath said that ye wise shall understand, so he hath said also that none of y^e wicked shall understand.³⁹

It seems clear why Newton does not publish most of his theological manuscripts even though he thinks his speculations to be scripturally based and, hence, sound Christian doctrinal analyses. It is not be-

³⁸ Yahuda Ms. 1.1, fols. 1 recto–3 recto.

³⁹ Newton’s large manuscript entitled a *Treatise on the Apocalypse* is in the possession of The Jewish National and University Library and comprises “8 bundles” which contain Sotheby Lot 227 and parts of 228. It is cataloged as “A large *Treatise on the Apocalypse*, incomplete at the end, (various versions) (similar to Keynes Ms. 5 in King’s College, Cambridge, and to Yah Ms 9 but materially different from both).” Yahuda Ms. 1 dates from quite early in Newton’s career, probably from the seventh decade of the seventeenth century. Newton writes (Yahuda Ms. 1.1, f. 1r.) that:

Having searched after knowledge in y^e prophetique scriptures, I have thought myself bound to communicate it for the benefit of others, remembering y^e judgement of him who hid his talent in a napkin. For I am perswaded that this will prove of great benefit to those who think it is not enough for a sincere Christian to sit down contented with y^e principles of y^e doctrin of Christ such as y^e Apostel accounts the doctrin of Baptisms & of laying on of hands & of the resurrection of y^e dead & of eternall judgement, but leaving these & the like principles desire to go on unto perfection until they become of full age and by reason of use have their exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebr 5.12

cause of any latitudinarian concern for the tender feelings of the anti-Christians idolaters who own and operate the “synagogue of Satan” or out of a desire to further his own Christian wisdom as a pious act of private devotion. It is because of the consequences for himself and his career for branding those in power—in church, university, and state—as anti-Christians who “whore after fals Gods.” Finally, too, he is convinced that, in all likelihood, the millennium is nearly at hand and that those with eyes to see and ears to hear, i.e., the true Christian “remnant,” will understand the truth. Newton’s constant reference to the following passage of Daniel is crucial to understanding his silence AND his view of himself as “scientific” Biblical exegete:

In the time of the end the wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein [Dan. xi.4, 10; Apoc. i.3].⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For Newton’s view of the centrality of this text, see his *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John. In Two Parts* (London, 1733), Part II, pp. 249–51, which reads:

This Prophecy is called *the Revelation*, with respect to *the scripture of truth* [Dan. x.21], which *Daniel* was commanded to *shut up and seal, till the time of the end* [Dan. xii.4,9]; and until that time comes, the Lamb is opening the seals: and afterwards the two Witnesses prophesy out of it a long time in sack-cloth, before they ascend up to heaven in a cloud. All which is as much as to say, that these Prophecies of *Daniel* and *John* should not be understood till the time of the end: but that some should prophesy out of them in an afflicted and mournful state for a long time, and that but darkly, so as to convert but few. But in the very end, the Prophecy should be so far interpreted as to convince many. *Then, saith Daniel, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* For the Gospel must be preached in all nations before the great tribulation, and end of the world. The palm-bearing multitude, cannot be innumerable out of all nations, unless they be made so by the preaching of the Gospel before it comes. There must be a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, before it can fall upon the toes of the Image, and become a great mountain and fill the earth. An Angel must fly thro’ the midst of heaven with the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations before *Babylon* falls, and the Son of man reaps his harvest. The two Prophets must ascend up to heaven in a cloud, before the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of *Christ*. ’Tis therefore a part of this Prophecy, that it should not be understood before the last age of the world; and therefore it makes for the credit of the Prophecy, that it is not yet understood. But if the last age, the age of opening these things, be now approaching, as by the great successes of late Interpreters it seems to be, we have more encouragement than ever to look into these things. If the general preaching of the Gospel be approaching, it is to us and our posterity that those words mainly belong: *In the time of the end the wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein* [Dan. xii.4, 10; Apoc. i.3].

Newton's "sense of chosenness" is usually discussed within the context of his "rules" for "methodizing" scripture but it is clear from his emphasis on Daniel 11 and Revelation 1 above that he believes that his own special authority as a Biblical exegete has its roots in his successes in interpreting God's word as written in the "book" of nature. He believes himself to be living, very possibly, "in the time of time of the end" because of the importance he accords to the date of the Council of Constantinople. In the year 381 C.E., that council declared finally in favor of Athanasian trinitarianism. If one adds the "time, times, and half a time" from Daniel 8:25 (a time equivalent to 1260 years) when Daniel expected that the messianic kingdom would at least begin to be established, one arrives at the year 1641, one year before Newton's birth.⁴¹

Much, much more than "nature and nature's laws," as far as Newton is concerned, apparently "lay hid in night" before "God said, 'Let Newton be, And all was light'."⁴²

Section 3: David Hume and the Possibility of Chaos

Rather than alchemically straining (and failing) to transform Newton into a deist, if we seek to find such a thinker, it is far more profitable to turn to the Scottish philosopher who intended to extend Newton's experiential method into the moral sciences. Despite his professed intention to explain the principles of human nature "by the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects,"⁴³ along the way, Hume manages to destroy in a systematic fashion every aspect of the Newtonian synthesis of science and theology.

In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (which was written, at least in part, around 1750, but which was published posthumously in 1779), Hume subverts the design argument of natural religion by

⁴¹ On Newton's "sense of chosenness," see Matania Z. Kochavi, "One Prophet Interprets Another: Sir Isaac Newton and Daniel," in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *The Books of Nature and Scripture*, pp. 105–122, esp. p. 116.

⁴² Alexander Pope proposed his famous couplet for a monument to Newton in Westminster Abbey. His original couplet was not chosen for the inscription but, in 1735, Pope published a slightly modified version of it. Derek Gjertsen, *The Newton Handbook* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), s.v. Pope, Alexander (1688–1744), p. 439.

⁴³ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), Introduction, p. xvi.

proposing other hypotheses which account plausibly for the apparent order of observed phenomena. David Hume, unlike Newton, is not in the least bothered by imagining chaos as a hypothetical cause for the "Origin of the World." Hume revives classical Epicurean atomism as a serious alternative to the design argument of Cleanthes in Part VIII of the *Dialogues*. The structure which appears to Newton to be so clearly caused by a divine architect arises naturally for an Epicurean as the result of the chance concatenation of atoms. Philo proposes as faintly probable the old conjecture of Epicurus according to which the universe consists of a finite number of indestructible particles distributed throughout infinite space which, over time, by innate motion natural to this matter, fall into such patterns as the world now exhibits.⁴⁴ "Some new order or oeconomy must be tried, and so on, without intermission; till at last some order, which can support and maintain itself, is fallen upon."⁴⁵

The Epicurean hypothesis originates in the thought of one content to imagine the detritus of disorder, a possibility which Newton unequivocally declares to be "unphilosophical."⁴⁶ Newton's millennial vision of a New Jerusalem is, despite the rational method which illustrates what Newton regards as good reasons for believing in the fulfillment of past (and future) prophecies, antithetical to Epicurus' chaos. The ironic delight with which Hume sceptically revives the old hypothesis of Epicurus within the context of the Newtonian design argument is evident. The Epicurean hypothesis, which Hume regards as only a faint "Probability,"⁴⁷ is only one among many which count as a plausible causal explanation of the apparent order of observed phenomena. Hume, not Newton, disconnects the frame of nature

⁴⁴ Hume "supposes" matter to be finite, not infinite, in his modification of Epicureanism. In the Epicurean exposition of Lucretius, *De Natura Deorum*, iii, 18-24, the gods are understood as a PART of the natural order and NOT the supernatural, external cause of that order. They exist in a state of self-sufficiency and blessedness wholly uninvolved with humankind or the natural order. Hume writes that the gods of the Epicureans, in a real sense, simply do not matter for man or nature. [Hume to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 10 March 1751, in *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1:152].

⁴⁵ *Dialogues*, p. 185.

⁴⁶ Writing in 1706 Newton proclaims simply that:

... it's unphilosophical to seek for any other Origin of the World, or to pretend that it might arise out of a Chaos by the mere Laws of Nature; although being once form'd, it may continue by those Laws for many Ages. [Newton, *Opticks*, Query 31, p. 402. First Published in 1704 in the first edition, this text was added to the Latin edition of 1706 as Query 23].

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

from a generally provident creator-designer. Newton's Lord God of absolute power, inferred in the "General Scholium" on the basis of the structure of solar system, becomes on Hume's analysis, one possible hypothesis among many.

But Hume does not rest content with ironic proposals which have as much purchase upon the imagination as the inference to a generally provident Lord God who created heaven and earth so as to exhibit design. Hume, in his earlier essay "On Miracles," eliminates the possibility of believing in any specially provident divine participation in the external world. Hume attacks the very possibility of believing in the prophetic past or the prophetic future.⁴⁸ In his coordinated attack on general and special providence, Hume far exceeds the casual ridicule of the scoffing dilettantes of Martin Ffolkes' circle and the limited critical attacks of a few of the deists. For Hume:

When we carry our speculations into the two eternities, before and after the present state of things; into the creation and formation of the universe; the existence and properties of spirits; the powers and operations of one universal spirit; omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, infinite, and incomprehensible: We must be far removed from the smallest tendency to scepticism not to be apprehensive that we have here got quite beyond the reach of our faculties.⁴⁹

Hume believes that all of the hypothetical causes which he has put forward as causal explanations alternative to design "triumph" in

⁴⁸ Force, "Newton's 'Sleeping Argument'," pp. 112-3: "Because a miracle is an event that contradicts firm and unalterable experience, the evidence for such an event must be extraordinarily strong. Such evidence is in fact impossible to obtain precisely because it runs counter to our unalterable experience to the contrary. When one goes on to add the possibility of deceit and error in the historical accounts of miracles, the 'plain consequence' is that miracles are simply too implausible to be believed." Given the entire argument against the possibility of rationally justified belief in miracles in Hume's famous essay "Of Miracles," I believe that the very last paragraph is particularly noteworthy in connection with Newton's argument from prophecy. There Hume writes: "What we have said of miracles may be applied, without any variation, to prophecies; and indeed, all prophecies are real miracles, and as such only, can be admitted as proofs of any revelation. If it did not exceed the capacity of human nature to foretell future events, it would be absurd to employ any prophecy as an argument for a divine mission or authority from heaven." [David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding in Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, by David Hume, Reprinted from the Posthumous Edition of 1777, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge. Third Edition with text revised and notes by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 130-1.

⁴⁹ Hume, *Dialogues*, pp. 134-5.

turn.⁵⁰ "But," says Hume, "all of them, on the whole, prepare a complete triumph for the sceptic; who tells them that no system ought ever to be embraced with regard to such subjects."⁵¹

*Section 4: Hume and Newton Confront the
Future State of Their Souls*

For Hume, the atheistic hypothesis of a chaotic, mechanistic materialism is a possibility. For Newton, such an hypothesis is simply "unphilosophical." For Newton, the natural philosopher who contributes more than any other modern natural philosopher to our understanding of the "frame of the world," the implication of a supreme Lord God/Architect flows naturally into his mind "with a force like that of sensation."⁵² The Great Architect explicit in Newton's providentialist voluntarism is a "God of order and not confusion." It is an intriguing counterpoint to the general theological positions of Newton and Hume—one an ardent believer in a Lord God of

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Hume finally does acknowledge what, in one mood, at least, his rational nature compels him to accept as the cause of natural order with the following distinctively damping, unenthusiastic, totally unprovidential and "undefined" proposition: *the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence*. If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication: If it afford no inference that affects human life, or can be the source of an action of forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no farther than to the human intelligence; and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of probability, to the other qualities of the mind: If this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs; and believe that the arguments, on which it is established, exceed the objections which lie against it? *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵² Cleanthes, *Dialogues*, p. 154, is made to say: "Consider, anatomize the eye: Survey its structure and contrivance; and tell me, from your feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation." I am certain that the character Cleanthes does in fact represent Newton's view on natural religion—and the generally provident nature of the divine architect—extremely well. Cleanthes, of course, is a literary creation, an interlocutor in a dialogue, a character, in essence, in a particular play with a particular point. The author of the dialogue, David Hume, specifically limits the boundaries of the *Dialogues* to natural religion in the "Introduction." The character "Cleanthes" has no fully articulated, complete theology. He speaks his part about natural religion well. But to reduce Newton to this one character in a dialogue is to ignore what Newton says in his manuscripts about the specially provident deity revealed to a few, adept Biblical exegetes.

absolute order, the other a religious sceptic willing to face the hypothetical possibility that the material of the chaos simply “falls” into (and out of) more or less stable patterns throughout eternity—to contrast their personal attitudes in the face of their own impending deaths.

Hume died on 25 August 1776, at age 65, at his home in Edinburgh. James Boswell visited the dying Hume. They chatted about religion because Boswell was curious to know whether Hume persisted in his scepticism about a future state “even when he had death before his eyes. . . .” Boswell records that he asked Hume:

if it was not possible that there might be a future state. He answered it was possible that a piece of coal put upon the fire would not burn; and he added that it was a most unreasonable fancy that we should exist for ever.

Boswell went on to ask “if the thought of annihilation never gave him any uneasiness?” According to Boswell, Hume:

said not the least; no more than the thought that he had not been, as Lucretius observes. “Well,” said I, “Mr. Hume, I hope to triumph over you when I meet with you in a future state; and remember you are not to pretend that you was joking with all this infidelity.” “No, no,” said he. “But I shall have been so long there before you come that it will be nothing new.”⁵³

As for Newton, both his natural and revealed religion ground his faith in his Lord God’s ability to raise those chosen for “honor” from their “sleep in the dust” so that they may travel about the stars in the company of the Holy Ghost. There exists one tantalizing letter to Newton from 1716 written by Joseph Morlands, a member of the Royal Society, who died in that year. Morlands consults Newton as one might consult a priest and requests that Newton provide even further religious “comfort” in the face of Morlands’ approaching death:

Sr

I have done and will do my best while I live to follow your advice to repent and believe I pray often as I am able that god would make me since & change my heart. Pray write me your opinion whether

⁵³ James Boswell, “An Account of my Last Interview with David Hume, Esq.” in the *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahid Castle*, 18 vols., ed. Geoffrey Scott (Mount Vernon, N.Y.: privately printed, 1928–34), 12:227–32.

upon the whole I may dye with comfort. This can do you no harm
written without your name. God knows I am very low & uneasie &
have but little strength

Yours most humble servt
Jos. Morland

Pray favour me with one line because when I parted I had not your
last words to me you being in hast.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, we do not have Newton's reply, if there was one. When Newton himself became terminally ill, William Stukeley comments upon the pain Newton endured (he had been diagnosed with having a "stone" in his bladder) and Newton's attitude in the face of death:

Such a struggle had his great soul to quit its earthly tabernacle! All this he bore with a most exemplary and remarkable patience, truly philosophical, truly Christian . . .⁵⁵

In his final illness, Newton refused to receive the sacraments of the Anglican church.⁵⁶ In contrast to their idolatry, Newton believes that, at death, most good souls simply "sleep" until the exciting reawakening depicted in his interpretation of the apocalyptic prophecies regarding the last judgement.

In the pertinent section of the Clark Library Manuscript of Newton's "Paradoxical Questions," Newton directly poses the key question about the fate of the soul and inquires how the early church developed the unscriptural, idolatrous, and anti-Christian doctrine of a continuously conscious immortal soul in the face of the many scriptural texts which state literally that, after death but prior to its specially provident resurrection and rembodiment for the Last Judgment, the soul simply sleeps in total unconsciousness. Newton believes that:

Were not many greatly prejudiced they would consider such texts of scripture as these. *In death there is no remembrance of thee in the grave who shall give thee thanks.* Psal. 6.5 *Shal thy loving kindness be declared in y^e grave*

⁵⁴ *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, ed. H. W. Turnbull, J. F. Scott, A. R. Hall, and Laura Tilling, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959–77), 7:382. Cited in Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest. A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 828.

⁵⁵ William Stukeley, *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton's Life*, ed. A. Hastings White (London, 1936), pp. 82–3. Cf. Westfall, *Never at Rest*, p. 869.

⁵⁶ Keynes Mss. 130.6, Book 1; 130.7, Sheet 1. Cited in Westfall, *Never at Rest*, p. 869.

thy wonders in the dark & thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Psal 88.11, 12. *The dead praise not y^e Lord neither any that go down into silence.* Psal 115.17. *The dead know nothing. . . . There is no work nor knowledge nor wisdom in y^e grave.* Eccles. 9.5, 10. *The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee* Isa. 38.18. *God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from y^e dead, to an inheritance. . . . in heaven* 1 Pet.1.3, 4 which is as much as to say that without y^e resurrection there is no hope, no inheritance in heaven.

Now according to the tenour of these texts of scripture the first Christians placed all y^e dead in Hades, that is, not in hell as we corruptly translate y^e word, but in y^e land of darknesse & silence as y^e old Testament sometimes expresses it. . . . And Athanasius by making Antony see y^e soule of Ammon ascend up to heaven, laid the foundation for introducing into y^e greek Churches this heathen doctrine of Daemons, together wth that Popish one of Purgatory.⁵⁷

This particular text connects with Newton's general theme in this manuscript regarding Athanasius' "dishonesty and falsification of records" of the early Church.⁵⁸ Newton's speculative point (for he acknowledges that this doctrine falls into the category of "strong meat" suitable only for "Elders") is not that the soul is annihilated but that it sleeps unconsciously in the dust and thus requires the POWER of the Lord God to awaken it at the time of the Last Judgement (and *this* doctrine of the resurrection and the Last Judgement Newton regards as "milk for babes" necessary for salvation and so

⁵⁷ Clarke Library Ms. "Paradoxical Questions concerning y^e morals & actions of Athanasius & his followers," under the heading, "Quest. Whether Athanasius did not set on foot the invocation of saints." I quote from this manuscript with the permission of the Clark Library. It is worth noting that Newton takes his Mortalist stance about how to interpret Jesus' promise to the thief on the cross (with most of the other Mortalists) on the ground of "proper" punctuation. If, as in Newton's manuscript and with most other Mortalists, Jesus says, "Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise," then Jesus means that he is giving his promise to the thief TODAY, as they are being crucified, for immortality at some unspecified time in the future. The location of the comma after today thus is crucial to Newton's Mortalist interpretation. But if the comma is placed after thee, the meaning changes radically. If Jesus says, "Verily I say unto thee, today Thou shalt be with me in paradise," then Jesus means to promise that the soul will begin its immortal phase TODAY after the death of the body. Norman T. Burns discusses how, for the Mortalists, punctuation is the key to meaning in his book entitled *Christian Mortalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 18ff.

⁵⁸ The phrase belongs to John Maynard Keynes who purchased the copy of the manuscript now in the collection of King's College Library (KEYNES Ms. 10). It is cited by Herbert McLachlan in his published version of the Keynes Collection. See H. McLachlan, *Sir Isaac Newton. Theological Manuscripts* (Liverpool: At the University Press, 1950), p. 60.

condemns those idolaters who reject it). Newton's faith in his Lord God, the supremely powerful architect who authors the books of nature and scripture, whom Newton believes will raise his true followers to the glories of the New Jerusalem is absolute and forms a sharp contrast with Hume who merrily proposes the Epicurean hypothesis and who, upon his deathbed, remarks of the irrationality of such a superstitious "fancy."

It is, in my opinion, reasonable to speculate that Newton may have entertained hope that his own soul might skip the long interval of "sleep" prior to Judgement Day and take part in the millennial reign of the returned Jesus as a "child of the resurrection."

Section 5: Conclusion

Newton believes utterly in what Hume sceptically mocks; Newton believes that God's providential order extends beyond the grave. In his words:

... in God's house (which is the universe) are many mansions, and he governs them by agents which can pass through the heavens from one mansion to another.⁵⁹

That his soul might be dissolved into its material components and simply cease to be is contrary to Newton's conception of the absolute orderliness of the frame of the world and what that orderliness tells him about the nature, and especially the power, of the Lord God of supreme dominion. It also contradicts what the Lord God has told the "wise" remnant—"in the time of the end" when "the wise shall understand"—about the many obscurities in scripture relating to the hoped for "future state." Without this belief in a Lord God who has recorded his many acts of supreme power in the past (in both the books of nature and scripture) and who has promised to awaken some sleeping souls in the future, either during the millennium or at the Day of Judgement, to a brave, new, and different world, the universe would indeed be for Newton a vast, empty, cold, sterile place reminiscent of Andrew Marvell's "Deserts of vast eternity" and evocative of Pascal's terror in confronting "the eternal

⁵⁹ Cited in Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, pp. 100–1.

silence of those infinite spaces.”⁶⁰ For Newton, the Lord God of Absolute Dominion—the God of Moses, Abraham, and Isaac Newton—stands between the saved “Remnant” and either the errors of apostate idolaters or the abyss of the modern scientific world reduced to Epicurean atoms, unspeakably immense, and random in its development and motion. Hume laughed on his deathbed at the possibility—even the likelihood—of the utter dissolution of his soul as he ironically jokes about meeting Boswell in the beyond. On display in this attitude is the courage and nobility of Hume, a true giant of the rational world of the Enlightenment.

⁶⁰ Marvell’s “To his coy mistress” and this particular Pascalian pensée are explicated at length in Christopher Hill, “Till the Conversion of the Jews,” in *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650–1800*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Leiden, 1988), pp. 12–36.

MATT GOLDISH

Conferring with Dick Popkin

I was a student of Dick Popkin as an undergraduate at UCLA but I did not yet grasp, at that time, the role which his scholarship would play in my development as a person and as an historian. My first experience with Popkin as Conference-Meister (as Jim Force likes to refer to him) was at his April 1992, Clark Library conference on "Jewish Christians and Christian Jews." I was a graduate student at the Hebrew University at the time, and it was my good fortune to be visiting my parents in Los Angeles when the conference took place. My advisor at the Hebrew University, Michael Heyd, had informed me about the conference, and I became very excited when I saw the list of participants. They included David Katz, Allison Coudert, James Force, and Amos Funkenstein, o.b.m. These were scholars whom I revered for their brilliant research which I was constantly reading far away at the Gershom Scholem reading room in Jerusalem's National Library. I shortly came to understand that these individuals constituted most of the core of the "Popkin Mafia" (another "Forcism"), the group of dynamic minds who share an ongoing encounter of ideas with Popkin. What took me a good deal longer to realize was that the conferences organized by Professor Popkin are not typical academic meetings. He has an uncanny knack for working with the best people in each field, and bringing together incredible intellectual collocations which are small, lively, and immeasurably fruitful. Popkin at the Clark is always a classic. For me, the 1992 conference was more than simply a chance to hear great ideas, for several reasons. First, I got to meet and interact with the scholars gathered there, several of whom have become my teachers and friends in the intervening years. My admiration only increased as I discovered how approachable and encouraging the Popkin circle was. Second, as I told Force and Popkin about my research in the Newton manuscripts (a project proposed to me originally by David Katz as

part of another Katz-Popkin-Force program), they expressed interest in having me write something for a volume which the two of them were then creating. With this opportunity to publish my small study of Newton and the Kabbalah, I began to feel that I was becoming part of the "Popkin Mafia's" junior ranks. Another door opened to me through that 1992 conference was that of the Clark Library and its treasures, an event whose significance needs no more elaboration for anyone who has worked at the Clark. Perhaps the most important outcome of this first conference encounter for me was the chance I got to be in contact with Professor Popkin himself, a contact which has continued and been of inestimable value on my end. A year later, when I was enjoying a summer as a doctoral research fellow at the Clark, I happened to start looking at a book by one John Xeres, a learned Jew who was converted to Anglicanism by Peter Allix. The book was peculiar in certain ways and I started going off in all directions about its possible importance. Fortunately, Dick Popkin was there with the wisdom to keep me out of deep space. "You'd better find out something about Peter Allix," was his advice. This was far from what I'd had in mind, but it turned out to be the most interesting and useful approach to the episode. I hereby present to him some of the results I came up with by following his suggestion to "find out something about" Allix. Inadequate as this investigation may be, I hope it will nevertheless point to some new aspects in the "Jewish Christians and Christian Jews" discussion.

THE BATTLE FOR “TRUE” JEWISH CHRISTIANITY: PETER ALLIX’S POLEMICS AGAINST THE UNITARIANS AND MILLENARIANS

Matt Goldish

Section 1. Introduction

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, according to Amos Funkenstein, major changes began to take place in the nature of Catholic anti-Jewish polemics. The root of these changes was the dawning realization among Christians that the Talmud, the Jewish oral tradition, was as central a text in contemporary Jewish life as the Hebrew Bible. The Talmud became henceforth an increasingly important element in conversionary polemics, first simply as the subject of frontal attacks, and later, more significantly, as a source of knowledge about Judaism which could be mined for opinions which support Christian doctrine. This material could be used to convince Jews that their own tradition actually endorses Catholicism. The technique of interrogating the Talmud and Midrash in order to pan out nuggets of “Christian truth” from the immense dross of rabbinic fancy was practiced most famously by Raymond Martini (d. ca. 1285–90), a Dominican friar, in his widely used tract *Pugio fidei*.¹ Martini’s book and his technique remained pillars of the religious debate with Jews for many generations.

In the two centuries following the Lutheran Reformation, Judaism took on a new meaning for some Christians. Protestants revived the Hebrew Bible as a source of Christian truth. In many cases close study of both Testaments fused with the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*, Millenarianism, and an awakened Renaissance sense of history, to produce a “Judaized” Christianity which attempted to recreate the conditions of the primitive church—conditions which must obtain again on the

¹ Amos Funkenstein, “Changes in Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Twelfth Century,” in idem, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 172–201, esp. pp. 196–8 [originally published in Hebrew, *Zion* 33 (1968), pp. 125–44]. On Martini, see Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), Chap. 6, pp. 129–69.

eve of the Second Coming. This Judaized Christianity was particularly common in western Europe during the seventeenth century; but many of its elements were perceived as heretical by the larger churches and a charge of "Judaizing" was usually considered a great affront.² Catholics used the charge against Protestants, Protestants against Catholics, and various sects against one another. In the later part of the seventeenth century, however, there were among those factions which had decisively split from the established churches some which willingly accepted the epithet of "Judaizers." They believed, in fact, that Judaism had preserved elements of original Christian theology which had lapsed or been deliberately forfeited during the middle ages. Many of the Millenarians and anti-Trinitarians fell into this category. This sometimes left the opponents of these movements lacking for persuasive arguments; they had never before encountered Christians for whom Judaizing was not self-evidently an error.

It was the contribution of one Peter Allix, a Huguenot exile in London, to marshal the type of Talmud-based polemic developed by Martini for converting Jews, in the fight against Millenarian and anti-Trinitarian Christians. Allix's argument was subtle: These sects have indiscriminately adopted ideas from the Talmud, Midrash, and Kabbalah, accepting all as bona-fide Jewish doctrine, and not stopping to separate out what is "genuinely" Jewish from the perfidious Pharisaic dross, introduced by the later antichristian rabbis. While there is, in Allix's opinion, a genuine Jewish oral tradition, that tradition, like the Old Testament (when properly construed), confirms a *Trinitarian* Christianity and a *spiritual* kingdom of Christ to come. One must search the Jewish books carefully for the forgotten grains of this truth. These sectaries have failed in what Funkenstein describes as a most important practice after the thirteenth century: "Distinguishing genuine and valuable from worthless and offensive traditions within the Jewish literature."³ The specific Jewish ideas espoused by the Millenarians and anti-Trinitarians, then, are not genuinely Jewish at all according to Allix, but are rather forgeries of the rabbis. Allix's works are noteworthy for their erudition and for their unique out-

² For discussions of early modern Judaizing trends, see, e.g., Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner, eds., *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews. From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994); David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

³ Funkenstein, "Changes in Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics," p. 197.

look on the meaning and implications of both Jewish and sectarian Christian thought.

Section 2. Peter Allix (1641–1717)

Peter Allix was born in Normandy and studied at the universities of Saumur and Sedan where he excelled in his mastery of Hebrew and Syriac. He was tremendously successful as a preacher and extremely learned but was forced to leave France for England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. He quickly mastered the English language, began writing, and soon received degrees of D.D. from Oxford and Cambridge.⁴

Allix was, as his works amply demonstrate, one of the most well read and knowledgeable Hebraists in England at that time. He cites and quotes an astounding array of Jewish sources, some of which he reached through translations but many of which he knew from Hebrew originals. His books on the Psalms and the Old Testament as proof of Christianity, for example, bear witness to fine Hebraic scholarship, an expertise he put to practical use in upholding the doctrines of the Anglican faith.⁵ This was the purpose of the works which will concern us here as well: *The Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church Against the Unitarians* (London, 1699); and *Two Treatises: I. A Confutation of the*

⁴ *Dictionary of National Biography* (London, 1717ff.), vol. I, pp. 334–5. At Oxford and Cambridge Allix could hardly have missed meeting Isaac Abendana, the Jewish scholar who was then engaged in translating the Mishnah and composing his famous Oxford calendars.

⁵ [Peter Allix], *Reflexions sur les Cinq Livres de Moyse pour E'tablir la Verite de la Religion Chre'tienne* (London, 1687; English translation, 1688); [idem], *The Book of Psalms, with the Argument of each Psalm, and a Preface Giving some General Rules for the Interpretation of this Sacred Book* (London, 1701). To give an idea of Allix's expertise in Jewish literature, here is a partial list of the books he used in *The Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*. He obviously relied heavily on the basic material he was discussing, viz., The Bible, Philo, The "Chalde Paraphrases" (i.e. the *Targumim*), the Apocrypha, the Midrashim and Talmud (the latter are highly difficult texts, though parts had been translated into Latin by this time). He also used Josephus, Josippon, Menasseh ben Israel, Rabbenu Behaye, Nahmanides, Maimonides, Gersonides, RaSh"i, Ibn Ezra, the mystical works *Bahir*, *Yezirah* and *Zohar*, Menahem Recanati, Elia Levita, *Imre Binah* of R. Azariah de Rossi, Abraham Zacuto's *Shalshet Ha-Kabbalah*, Isaac and Judah Abarbanel, Reuchlin, Gikatilla, R. Hai and R. Sa'adya Ga'on, Moses Bottarel, David Gans' *Zemah David*, R. Me'ir Aldabi's *Shevile Emunah*, R. Me'ir Arama's *Akedat Yizhak*, R. Abraham Shalom's *Neve Shalom*, and two Mss. of kabbalistic works, *Iggeret Ha-Sodot* and *Sod Merkavah Elionah*, used by Rittangel in his Latin translation of the *Yezirah*. This incomplete list gives and idea of Allix's breadth in Jewish learning.

hopes of the Jews concerning the Last Redemption. II. An Answer to Mr. Whiston's Late Treatise on the Revelations. Being An Examination of the several Scripture Prophecies which he hath applied to the Times after the Coming of the Messiah (London, 1707).

*Section 3. Allix's Critique of the Unitarians (Part 1):
His Theory of the Jewish Oral Tradition*

To understand Allix's polemic in *The Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, some background concerning one corner of the Unitarian debate at the end of the seventeenth century is necessary. In 1685, George Bull, Bishop of St. David's, published his influential *Defensio fidei Nicaenae*⁶ in defense of the Anglican Church against the Socinians and Unitarians. Among the proofs brought in this work is a series of quotations from Jewish sources to prove that the ancient Jews believed in a *Logos* in the Trinitarian sense, that is, a Demiurge emanating from God, which is identical with the God of Israel and various spiritual phenomena in the Old Testament, and is pre-existent. Bull brings proofs from Philo Judaeus (who speaks a great deal about a *Logos*); the "Chaldee Paraphrases" of the Old Testament (Targum Jonathan and Onkelos, who use the term *Memar* or *Memrah*, Word, in translating God's speech to Moses);⁷ the Apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*; and "the very ancient book Tanchumah" and Rabbi Gerundensis (R. Jonah of Gerundi), cited from Masius. These authorities are referred to by Bull as part of the Jews' *Cabala*, their ancient tradition.⁸

A Unitarian named Thomas Smalbroke wrote a response to Bull, called *The Judgment of the Fathers Concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity*;

⁶ George Bull (Bishop of St. David's), *Defensio fidei Nicaenae, ex scriptis, quae extant, Catholicorum doctorum, qui intra tria prima Ecclesiae Christianae secula floruerunt* (Oxford, 1685; English translation, 1725). I have used the 1851 translation available in the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*, vols. 29–30 (Oxford, 1851).

⁷ Compare this to the conversionary treatise of Caspar Calvor, *Gloria Christi* (Leipzig, 1710), discussed by Hugo Odeberg, "Fragen von Metatron Schekina und Memra," *Bulletin de la Societe Royale des Lettres de Lund*, vol. 2 (1941–2), pp. 31–46. I am indebted to my esteemed colleague Dr. Daniel Abrams for this reference. Bull's knowledge of the "Chalde Paraphrases" was undoubtedly through the London Polyglot of 1656, in which these works were published and translated.

⁸ This book was published anonymously. Allix repeatedly refers to the author as "Mr. N."

Opposed to Dr. G. Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith (London, 1695), in which Bull's "Jewish" arguments for Trinitarianism are among those disputed.⁹ In his first argument Smalbroke declares: "I had thought, that all Protestants, nay all Christians, were agreed, that the *Cabbala* is the Invention of the Pharisees and Masters of the Pharisaical Sect, not a Tradition from Moses."¹⁰ If it was truly part of the Law received by Moses at Mount Sinai, then it should have been discussed in Scripture and written down as part of the canon compiled by Ezra. Smalbroke poses the following dilemma for Bull: If the "*Cabala*" is truly from Sinai, then its authority should be equal to that of the Old and New Testaments. If it is a human invention, then Bull should not cite it as a doctrinal source.¹¹

The most powerful argument against Bull, says Smalbroke, is the fact that the Jews, from Origin's Trypho to the those of the present day, have always seen the tripartite godhead as the central impediment to their conversion. It appears to them as "a revolt to Heathenism and Paganism," an affront to the first commandment to believe in one God.¹² The Jews, then, cannot in any sense be construed as supporters of Trinitarian doctrine.

As for the specific sources cited, Smalbroke says that none of them really confirms any Jewish belief in a Word which was pre-existent, emanated, a son of God or a Demiurge. The *Wisdom of Solomon*, he claims, was perhaps written by a Jew, but it is well known to have been translated by a Christian who inserted his own beliefs, as Grotius affirms. The "Chaldee Paraphrases" of Jonathan and Onkelos do not, on closer examination, support the idea of a potent Word as part of the godhead. The works of Philo Judaeus, as others had already stated, were forgeries, written by a different Philo at the close of the second century, who was a Christian. As for the two sources cited from Masius, R. Jonah of Gerona and the *Tanchumah*, Smalbroke simply falls back on the argument that they cannot have been authored

⁹ Bull, *Defence of the Nicene Creed*, I:29–35.

¹⁰ [Smalbroke], *The Judgment of the Fathers*, p. 58. This proposition was by no means generally accepted. For example, I have been informed by my esteemed colleague, Dr. Jonathan Elukin, that Cuneaus did not believe it. Certainly the Van Helmont circle did not accept such an opinion.

¹¹ [Smalbroke], *The Judgment of the Fathers*, pp. 58–9. The term *Cabala* as used here does not refer to the mystical tradition, but to the entire Oral Law and rabbinical tradition.

¹² [Smalbroke], *The Judgment of the Fathers*, pp. 59–62.

by Jews because no Jew could ever believe in the multiple godhead for which Bull claims to have found support in them.¹³

Smalbroke's tract appears to have been the immediate cause of Allix's writing his *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church Against the Unitarians*.¹⁴ While Bull and Smalbroke might both know enough Hebrew to play games with the Jewish sources, Allix could bring vast rabbinic erudition to bear on the problem. The *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church* is 460 pages long, far exceeding the space devoted to the problem in Bull and Smalbroke, for whom this was simply one of many issues. Allix would deal with the conundrum posed by Smalbroke: Is the Jewish rabbinic tradition in fact of Mosaic origin, or merely a collection of Pharisaical fantasies?

Allix's solution is a version of that which Ramond Martini had pioneered five centuries earlier, but which had never (to the best of my knowledge) been applied in the context of an intra-Christian polemic. Allix explains that there indeed is a genuine oral tradition from Sinai, passed along by the generations of Jews throughout biblical times and into the Second Temple era. After the advent of Christ, however, this tradition was purposely corrupted by the "later Rabbins," who rejected Jesus despite the clear indications from their own tradition that he was the awaited Savior. The Jews purposely tampered with their ancestors' exegetical heritage. By accepting a pre-Christian, Trinitarian oral law as authentic, Allix turns the rabbinical tradition from a source of antagonism for Christianity into an important "proof" that the ancient Jews were Trinitarians. While other theologians either rejected all of rabbinic literature, or merely looked for Christological proofs in it without drawing any further conclusions, Allix shifts that tradition to his own advantage.

Allix offers two reasons, in different places, for which the rabbis might have wanted to intentionally betray their heritage. First is the standard claim that they wished to keep their power over the people. To this end the rabbis strengthened their position by deliberately claiming more power than the Bible ever granted them; and by forbidding Jews to approach Scripture without the filter of rabbinic exegesis to thwart plain interpretations.¹⁵ However, Allix allows for a different and interesting possibility.

¹³ [Smalbroke], *Judgment of the Fathers*, pp. 60–1.

¹⁴ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, Preface, pp. xvi–xvii, 3.

¹⁵ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, p. 391.

I am not ignorant that the greater part of the *Jewish* Nation being oppressed with the *Roman* Yoak, and finding no comfort for it in these [Christological] Notions, which are for the most part Spiritual, did therefore about our Saviour's time frame to themselves more carnal notions concerning the Kingdom of the Messias: Fancying that he should come as a victorious Prince, to conquer, and to avenge them of their Enemies. They removed from their thoughts the accounts of his Death, as contrary to those Glorious descriptions which suited better with their minds. They expected the Messias should come to restore presently the Kingdom unto Israel. . . .¹⁶

While Allix expresses no sympathy for this reasoning, he acknowledges that there might be a motive other than pure stubbornness and malediction for what he perceives as the Jews' deliberate recasting of the messianic role. In other places as well, Allix shows a rare willingness to understand why the Jews have refused to convert.¹⁷

Nevertheless, some bits of the "real" oral tradition have not been erased by the later Jews, and these can particularly be found in the oldest sources: Philo, The Apocrypha, the Chaldee Paraphrases, an occasional Midrash (of which Tanchumah is one), and the Kabbalah.¹⁸ A careful search through these works reveals that the Jews formerly believed in a Trinity and a Christ who would arrive at the end of the Temple period.¹⁹ He would be the Son of God, the Word, and the Demiurge which Trinitarians had always detected at work in the Old Testament.²⁰

Allix begins the *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church* by trying to prove that the ancient Jews had a received and true exegetical tradition, well known to Jesus and his disciples, and used by them to attract Jewish adherents. He then demonstrates that the Apocryphal books, Philo and the Chaldee Paraphrases are all reliable sources

¹⁶ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, p. 39.

¹⁷ He says that the practices of idolatrous saint and relic worship, mendacity on the part of the friars, and cruelty of many Christian princes toward them has worked against their becoming proselytized, "nothing being more apt to make Men reject Truth, than persecution" (*Ibid.*, pp. 388–9). This was an argument commonly made during the Whitehall conference concerning the readmission of the Jews to England. Furthermore, Allix says, Christians have often had incorrect theologies which scared off the Jews or which have misconstrued the Jews' own writings, all of which did nothing to aid Jewish conversion (Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, pp. 32, 432).

¹⁸ I will use this spelling to denote the mystical tradition known by this name today.

¹⁹ This last point is related to Allix's critique of the Millenarians; see below.

²⁰ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, *passim*.

concerning this old tradition, and that they bear witness to the Jews' former belief in a Trinity. Traces of this belief can still be found in those works. The Jews had formerly believed in a Word which was a distinct person in the godhead, identical to the appearance of God and the Angel of the Lord found in the Old Testament. This Word, or *Logos*, was the same as the divine Name *yod he vav he* of the Bible and had been taken by the ancient Jews as identical to the messiah, who would be incarnated as the Son of God. The first Christians, as we find them in the New Testament, clearly believed and spoke in accordance with these same conceptions.²¹

Some Unitarians had implied that, if ancient Jewish sources seem to speak of a tripartite godhead and divine messiah, they got the idea from the Platonists, which is what Allix next sets out to disprove. The "modern Jews" (by which he means those who lived since the time of Jesus) have purposely changed the exegesis which they received from their ancestors, just so they could better argue with the Christians. They admit this specifically in several places. The Unitarians, who think they are restoring the beliefs of primitive Jewish-Christianity, are actually mistaken because they have taken the opinion of the "modern" Jews as genuine. In fact, the Jews of Jesus' time had Trinitarian beliefs. These Unitarians think they can convert Jews with their seemingly more Judaized Christianity, but they are wrong.²² This, briefly, is the background and content of Peter Allix's theory of the Jewish oral tradition.

*Section 4. Allix's Critique of the Unitarians (Part 2):
His Theory of the Relation between the Jews and the Nazarenes*

Allix was determined to quash another, related claim of the Unitarians as well: that they are identical with the Nazarenes, the original Jewish-Christians. Stephen Nye, a leading spokesman for the anti-Trinitarian Socinians, had made the following claim:

They whom we call *Socinians*, were by the Fathers and first Ages of Christianity, called *Nazarenes*; by which name St. *Paul* is accused before

²¹ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, Chaps. II–XX. See also, e.g., F. E. Walton, *Development of the Logos-doctrine in Greek and Hebrew Thought* (London, 1911).

²² Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, Chaps. XXI–XXVII. At the end of the work is *A Dissertation concerning the Angel who is called the Redeemer*, Gen. XLVIII.

Felix, Acts 24.5. As *Nazarens* was their first Name, so afterwards they were called *Ebionites*, *Mineans*, *Artemonites*, *Theodotians*, *Symmachians*, *Paulinists*, *Samosatenians*, *Photinians*, and *Monarchians*.²³

Nye's claim must be understood not only on the background of Protestant attempts to revive ancient Christianity but also in context of the particularly radical and active English movement toward restoration of the primitive church in the seventeenth century.²⁴ A widespread desire to be identified with the ancient Jewish Christians was one aspect of this phenomenon. John Traske, a radical sectarian of London, led a group of followers into a syncretistic Jewish Christianity. He was just one of a sizable group of Saturday Sabbatarians in mid seventeenth-century England who were criticized by contemporaries for adopting Jewish ways.²⁵ Several Ranters, particularly George Foster and Thomas Tany, identified themselves with the Jews.²⁶ During the Barebones Parliament, an attempt was actually made to replace English law with the biblical law of the ancient Hebrews.²⁷ Elsewhere, in Scotland, there was a widespread Judaizing movement characterized especially by the avoidance of pork.²⁸ The phenomenon was widespread on the Continent as well. In certain correspondence

²³ [Stephen Nye], *A Brief History of the Unitarians, Called also Socinians. In Four Letters, Written to a Friend . . . Printed in the Year, 1691*, in [John Biddle], ed., *The Faith of One God, Who is only the Father . . .* (London, 1691), p. 10.

²⁴ The English were concerned with how their own church should be constituted to best imitate the original church of Christ, so much of the literature is polemical as well as historical. See, e.g., William Cave, *Primitive Christianity: or, the religion of the ancient Christians in the first Ages of the Gospel . . .* (London, 1673); George Fox, *The arraignment of popery: being a short collection . . . of the state of the church in the primitive times . . .* (London, 1669); Lord Peter King, *An enquiry into the constitution, discipline, unity & worship of the primitive church that flourished within the first three hundred years after Christ . . .* (London, 1691); Francis Howgill, *The glory of the true church discovered: as it was in its purity in the primitive time . . .* (London, 1662); Herbert Croft, *The naked truth, or, the true state of the primitive church . . .* (London, 1675).

²⁵ David S. Katz, *Sabbath and Sectarianism in Seventeenth Century England* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988); idem, *Philo-semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), Chap. 1.

²⁶ Jerome Friedman, *Blasphemy, Immorality, and Anarchy: The Ranters and the English Revolution* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987), pp. 138–40, 170–72.

²⁷ D. H. Willson and S. E. Prall, *A History of England*, third ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), p. 320.

²⁸ Arthur H. Williamson, "'A Pil for Pork Eaters': Ethnic Identity, Apocalyptic Promises, and the Strange Creation of the Judeo-Scots," paper delivered at the Clark Library conference on "Jewish Christians and Christian Jews," April, 1992. This paper contained some material not found in the published version, "British Israel and Roman Britain: The Jews and Scottish Models of Polity from George Buchanan to Samuel Rutherford," in *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews*, pp. 97–117.

between Drusius, Serrarius, and other member of the Republic of Letters, Protestants are identified with Karaite Jews and Catholics with Pharisees or Rabbinites.²⁹ The opportunity to be identified with the ancient Jews, then, particularly the primitive Christian Jews, was a serious matter in debates of the period and Allix was in a position to take this prize away from the Unitarians.

In his Preface to the *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, Allix speaks at length about the various anti-Trinitarians in history, refuting their claim to maintain the true Jewish Christianity of Jesus and his Disciples. "These Hereticks thought they followed the Opinion of the old *Jews*,"³⁰ he says, but really,

The Doctrine of our Church being the same which was taught by Christ and his Apostles, it will be an easy matter to prove it . . . by the same places of Scripture by which Christ and his Apostles converted the *Gentiles* over to the Christian Faith; and by which the Hereticks were confuted, who followed or renewed the Errors which the Jews have fallen into since Christianity began.³¹

Allix's conclusion is, then, that it is really the Anglican Trinitarians who represent the true beliefs of primitive Jewish-Christianity.

Section 5. Allix's Critique of the Millenarians

From the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century, a very powerful stream of Millenarianism broke out in England and throughout Europe.³² English Millenarianism had some distinct qualities: it tended

²⁹ J. van den Berg, "Proto-Protestants? The Image of the Karaites as a Mirror of the Catholic-Protestant Controversy in the Seventeenth Century," in J. van den Berg and E. G. E. van der Wall, eds., *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), pp. 33–49.

³⁰ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, p. vi.

³¹ Allix, *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*, p. xvii.

³² On the importance of Millenarianism in this period, including the relevance of Judaism, see the various studies of Richard H. Popkin, including, e.g., *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought, 1650–1800*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988); "The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought: Scepticism, Science and Millenarianism," in idem, *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), pp. 90–119. See also Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); C. A. Patrides and J. Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Katherine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and

to be very intense and was heavily grounded in historical and biblical research. These aspects gave the apocalyptic imagination a very concrete, practical bent, and put it in particularly close relationship with critical biblical analysis in England. Three major forces exerted themselves in the new wave of scriptural interpretation at this time: the relative freedom of the English to interpret Scripture as they wished; a literalist trend in attempting to understand the biblical books the way their authors intended; and a faculty for text criticism inherited from the humanists of the Renaissance. One outcome of these forces was an attempt to look at the Bible scientifically, to systematize it, and read it as an historical document. This approach influenced biblical criticism. One of its effects was to stimulate a new "realist" school of Millenarians. This outlook was developed in England by Joseph Mede, the great Cambridge theologian, Millenarian, and founder of a new method in Bible studies.³³ The method of Mede and his school was a systematization of scriptural prophecy, particularly that of Daniel and Revelation, to determine a philology of prophetic language; a calculation of the chronological sequence and dating of apocalyptical events; and an active approach to the coming apocalypse. These thinkers, in short, created a "scientific" Millenarianism.³⁴ Among the Mede-inspired Millenarians were John Dury, Samuel Hartlib, William Twisse, Henry More, John Milton, Isaac Barrow, Isaac Newton, William Whiston, and later, Joseph Priestly.³⁵

Herald Publishing Association, 1948), vol. II; and Avihu Zakai, "The Poetics of History and the Destiny of Israel: The Role of the Jews in English Apocalyptic Thought During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 5 (1996), pp. 313–50.

³³ On Mede, see Firth, *Apocalyptic Tradition*, Chap. VII; Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:542–9; Popkin, *Third Force*, index s.v. "Mede".

³⁴ Richard Popkin has also pointed out the belief of Mede and many disciples, especially Newton, that the growth of scientific knowledge is part of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. See his Foreword to James Force, *William Whiston: Honest Newtonian* (Cambridge, 1985), p. xi.

³⁵ For part of this list, see Popkin, Foreword to Force, p. xii; idem, "Hartlib, Dury and the Jews," in M. Greengrass, M. Leslie and T. Raylor, eds., *Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation: Studies in Intellectual Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 118–36. Though he was not born until 1733, Priestly is just the sort of Millenarian against whom Allix is polemicising. See J. van den Berg, "Priestly, the Jews and the Millennium," in David S. Katz and J. I. Israel, eds., *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 256–74. Newton, Whiston, and Priestly are particularly interesting examples in our context because they were anti-Trinitarians: Priestly was a Unitarian and Newton and Whiston were Arians. Furthermore, as James Force has argued in his book *William Whiston: Honest Newtonian*, Newton's theological views were fairly accurately represented by Whiston, the subject of the second of Allix's *Two Treatises*.

It is to this group of Millenarians particularly, though not exclusively, that Allix directs his criticism.

Allix attacks the “Judaizing” of Millenarians in his book *Two Treatises*. The titles of these tracts are somewhat misleading. The first, *A Confutation of the Hopes of the Jews Concerning the Last Redemption* is intended primarily as an attack on the Millenarians, and only incidentally as a conversionary work.³⁶ The second tract, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston’s Late Treatise on the Revelations*, while it takes Whiston as its starting point, is also intended as a general criticism of the Millenarians. Allix’s attack in both works centers on two main points: that the scriptural passages concerning the return of the Jews to Zion and the coming of the end-times (described, for example, in the seventh chapter of Daniel) were fulfilled already in the Second Temple period; and that these passages do not refer to a physical regathering of the Jews.³⁷ The Millenarians are following the later rabbinic Jews into error by accepting their false view that these prophecies refer to future events, rather than to incidents which already occurred at the time of the Jewish return from Babylonian exile. To add fuel to the fire, Allix calls this a “papist” error:

Since Protestants applyed themselves to the Study of the *Revelations* of *St. John*, they divided themselves into Two Parties. The one [Millenarians] in Imitation of the Papist Divines and upon the same Foundation that crept in amongst Christians out of the School of the Jews, pretend that some allusions found in the Book of the *Revelations*, obliged them to apply all the Oracles of the Old Prophets to the Millennium. So that without the least hesitation they apply to the time of the Messiah a great number of Prophecies which had their accomplishment before the coming of our Lord. As the Jews afford them no small assistance upon those places of the Old Testament, so it happened that they also embraced one part of the Jewish System with regard to the Second coming of the Messiah. They adopted a Temporal Reign of the Messiah, Re-establishment of *Jerusalem*, of its Temple, of its Sacrifices, a Kingdom of the Jews in the Land of *Canaan* . . .³⁸

³⁶ Allix implies as much in the Preface (p. v): “I undertook [the translation of Sa’adya] willingly, supposing I might do some Service to the Christians, and to the Jews themselves.” Furthermore, the dedication explains the book’s purpose, which is to confute Millenarians.

³⁷ Allix here is trying to argue the point from both sides, creating something of a contradiction. On the one hand, he wants to say that the prophecy concerning the regathering of the Jews was already fulfilled when they returned from their exile in Babylonia and built the Second Temple, which was a physical and temporal event. On the other hand, he holds that these prophecies are to have no physical fulfillment.

³⁸ Dedication of the *Confutation*, unpaginated.

Not the least interesting aspect of this statement and others similar to it is Allix's understanding of Millenarianism as a chiliast *exegetical* position. When a Protestant reads the passages in Daniel and the Apocalypse the way Jews and Papists do, as an unfulfilled prediction of a temporal Millennium, he is a Millenarian. Allix is not concerned with the acuteness or immediacy of the expectation, which tend to be the defining factors in modern scholarly discussions of Millenarianism.³⁹

In the *Confutation*, Allix's method for disproving the messianic reading of these passages by both Jews and Millenarians is to translate and then criticize the eighth chapter of Sa'adya Gaon's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (*Sefer Emunot Ve-De'ot*), a medieval work of Jewish philosophy, in which the author discusses the messiah. At the beginning of this critique, Allix delineates more sharply the basis of his quarrel with the Millenarians and Jews:

But the State of the Question between the Jews and Us lies in this, viz., Whether the Promise, that was made to them by *Moses* of a return into their Country, and of the Restoration of their State, and of the Temple with the *Levitical* Worship, was not fulfilled when they return'd from *Chaldaea* and *Assyria*, by virtue of the Edict of *Cyrus*, and by the Favour of his Successors; or whether those Promises, which have been repeated since *Moses*, *Deut.* Chap. 30. to *Zachariah* one of the last Prophets, Chap. ix. 7. ought to be understood of the State which they have been reduced to by the *Roman* Empire; so that they must be brought again into their Country, and be restor'd therein to a most glorious and flourishing Condition; The *Messias*, who shall be their Leader, as they will have it, restoring their Temple and their State, and subduing all other Nations. We maintain the 1st. Position, and the *Jews* maintain the 2d.⁴⁰

Having seen Allix's dedication, we understand that his criticism of the Jews' opinion here is meant to include the Millenarians. The Jews he speaks of are, of course, the later rabbinic Jews.

³⁹ See, for example, the definition of Millenarianism supplied by Bernard Capp: "Millenarianism may be defined broadly as belief in an imminent kingdom of heaven on earth to be established with supernatural help; its inspiration sprang from the biblical prophecies, especially in Revelation." Capp, "The Fifth Monarchists and Popular Millenarianism," J. F. MacGregor and B. Reay, eds., *Radical Religion in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1984), p. 165. Again, here is Hillel Schwartz's definition: "Millenarianism . . . is the belief that the end of this world is at hand and that in its wake will appear a New World inexhaustibly fertile, harmonious, sanctified, and just." Schwartz, "Millenarianism: An Overview," in M. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 9:521.

⁴⁰ Allix, *Confutation*, p. 30.

Allix's critique is couched as a point-by-point refutation of R. Sa'adya's proofs that the messiah has yet to come and fulfill these prophecies. His strategy here is similar to the one he employs in *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church*: to show that the true ancient Jewish tradition, still to be found hidden here and there in rabbinic literature, supports his position, in this case, that the Millennial prophecies were already fulfilled. The large section (pp. 85–101) in which Allix deals with R. Sa'adya's refutation of Christian principles is noteworthy.

Allix is very well aware that his view is debatable and that many Christian authorities, both Catholic and Protestant, disagree with him. He therefore attempts to discredit these views in his dedication and in an appendix, saying that those who hold them have also been taken in by the later Jews. The apologetic begins from the first words in the book:

Nothing is easier than to fall into an Error, when it is upheld by the Authority of Eminent Writers, and grounded upon Principles almost generally approved of by the greatest Antiquity. We can scarce disengage our selves from it, till with deliberation we weigh and examine the ill consequences which naturally follow this Error, and the absurdities arising from it. . . . Many can't free themselves from their prejudices, which engage them to embrace the Authority of those who went before them, and obtain'd a great Esteem and Reputation by their Works or Studies.

The Doctrine of the *Millennium* is an authentick proof of the Reflexion I just now made; there is nothing established with greater Solidity than it is by *Daniel* ch. 2. and ch. 7. and by St. *John* in the *Revelation*. And yet before the midst of the Second Century we find that several Christians had already mix'd with this Doctrine many notions which savoured altogether of *Judaism*; some Jews converted to Christianity having made their utmost effort to join with the Doctrine of St. *John* the Ideas of their Masters with relation to a Temporal Reign of the *Messiah* in *Palestina*, and concerning several other Articles, diametrically opposite to the Doctrine of our Saviour Christ.

After this mixture of those Jewish Ideas, with those of St. *John* the Apostle, this Doctrine became a stumbling block to many Christians, and we may say, that it occasioned an irreconcilable difference between the Ancientest Interpreters of holy Scripture. *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria*; *Origen* and his Disciples became famous for standing up and opposing this medley of Jewish Notions with St. *John's* System . . . *Apollinaris* Bishop of *Laodicea* follow'd the Jewish Ideas of the *Millenium* in their full extent.⁴¹

⁴¹ Allix, *Confutation*, Dedication, pp. i–iii.

Allix goes on to discuss the differences between later Church Fathers on this point, then makes the distinction between Protestants who accept the "Jewish" interpretation and those who don't, as we have seen. It is clear that Allix viewed the Jews of the apostolic age as already given to rabbinic falsifications about the Millennium. He finishes by presenting the arguments before John, Bishop of Ely, to whom the work is dedicated, for his judgement.

The second treatise is directed at William Whiston, a mathematician and disciple of Sir Isaac Newton in both science and theology.⁴² Whiston had recently brought out *An Essay on the Revelation of St. John, So far as concerns the Past and Present Times* (London, 1706), which was the occasion for Allix's attack. From the beginning of Allix's preface the connection of this treatise with the first one is already clear, as is his overall design in the work. "Instead of the true Millennium seetled [!] by St. *John* in his Revelation, you have espoused all along the Ideas of the common Jewish Writers . . ."⁴³ On the following page Allix states that "Those Hypotheses of the *Jews*, upon which you ground your Collection, are diametrically opposite to Christianity."⁴⁴ The first part of his method in criticizing Whiston, he then declares, will be to point out the true origin of Whiston's errors, which is in the opinions of the Jewish exegetes. For an example he cites Whiston's belief that the posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will always remain God's people.⁴⁵ The correct Christian belief, says Allix, is that the physical heirs of the patriarchs have been replaced by their spiritual heirs, the Christians. He continues with examples of the Jews' beliefs concerning their future regathering which are false according to genuine Christian doctrine: return to the Land of Israel, rebuilding of the physical Temple in Jerusalem, a Davidic messiah, and the continued practice of the ritual law. These errors, says Allix are the result of the Jews' neglect of the correct method for scriptural interpretation, which will be the second part of Allix's "method."⁴⁶

The making of rules for scriptural interpretation has particular significance in light of an added feature in the *Answer to Mr. Whiston*.

⁴² On him, see Force, *William Whiston*.

⁴³ Allix, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston*, p. iii.

⁴⁴ Allix, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston*, p. iv.

⁴⁵ Allix, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston*, p. v.

⁴⁶ Allix, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston*, p. vii.

As was mentioned, it is not only Whiston with whom Allix is taking issue, but the whole interpretive tradition to which he belonged. In a large appendix (*Answer to Mr. Whiston*, pp. 65–91) called “Concerning Mr. Mede’s Method which Mr. W. pretends to follow exactly,” Allix asserts that the error of Whiston and others of Mede’s disciples in “Judaizing” passages concerning the Millennium originates with Mede himself. “I find he hath been prevailed upon to follow the Jewish explications of those Texts of the Old Prophets, as if they had never been accomplished, which is the opinion of the Jews; in supposing which things I am fully convinced at present he was in the wrong.”⁴⁷ Allix returns here to his apologetic of the Dedication, acknowledging that many of the Church Fathers and major Catholic and Protestant exegetes support Mede. But he tries to prove that Mede had been selective in his acceptance of their doctrines, many of which are actually contrary to his thesis. The method of establishing rules for the interpretation of prophecy is clearly meant as a countermeasure to the rule-making of Mede and his school, who developed the method. The implication is that Mede had the right idea in making rules of interpretation, but his rules were wrong, and Allix is coming to offer some correct rules. Allix’s hermeneutics bear a strong resemblance in style and content to those of Mede.⁴⁸

Having seen the vehemence with which Allix writes against these “Jewish” Millenarian ideas, it is ironic to discover that he is writing this work in 1707 as a recently reformed Millenarian and disciple of Joseph Mede. “I have altogether renounced these Principles of Mr. Mede, which I yet afore followed but too closely . . .,”⁴⁹ he declares. Indeed, in his previous *De messiae duplici adventu dissertationes Duae Adversus Judaeos* (London, 1701), and especially in his earlier manuscripts (found in Cambridge Ms. Add. 2608), Allix upholds all the same opinions which he wishes to refute in 1707, including a temporal Second Coming which will feature the conversion of the Jews and their return to Palestine. For example, in defending his previous interpretations of Psalms, he says:

⁴⁷ Allix, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ The actual rules are found on pp. x–xv. Compare these to the rules for interpreting Scripture which were framed by Sir Isaac Newton at roughly the same time, found in: Frank Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), Appendix A, pp. 116–25.

⁴⁹ Allix, *An Answer to Mr. Whiston*, p. 71. He claims that Dr. Worthington, another (and more well known) follower of Mede, had also rejected his Millenarianism recently (pp. 71–2).

An objection which several persons have made, is touching what I layed as a foundation, vid. That many Psalms suppose a reestablishment of the Jewish state, in a condition altogether flourishing. I freely acknowledge, that I believe that future comming of JC in which all Israell shall be saved as St. Paul hath thought it according to the senses of Prophecy, then the business of those, which are in an other opinion, to contend against St. Paul. . . . Would it not be a ridiculous thing not to acknowledge the reestablishment of Jerusalem, when we finde in the Psalms the word Sion to be used 39 times and alwayes taken prop[.] & literally, when it speaks of its destruction, and to understand it figuratively when it speaks of the promisses of its reestablishment? Besides this it is more considerable, because the prophesies of the other Holy Authors from Moses to the last prophets have no meaning, if we do not understand them literally of the reestablishment of Jerusalem, as it has been acknowledged by the Ancientest fathers of the church, as Justin, Irenaeus, &c.⁵⁰

One must wonder what powerful experience could have caused this radical shift in Allix's outlook over so short a period. In any case, it is interesting to note that Allix's views carried weight. Whiston himself cites Allix on a matter of prophetic interpretation in a later work.⁵¹

Section 6. Conclusion

In the unique atmosphere of 17th- and early 18th-century England, where aligning one's Christian views with Jewish doctrine was not always a liability, Peter Allix found a way to use "Judaizing" in the service of Anglican orthodoxy. In debating the Millenarians and Unitarians, who both claimed the support of Jewish tradition, Allix seized the high ground by reviving a polemical strategy created by Ramond Martini for use against the Jews themselves in the middle ages. Martini's claim, as reengineered by Allix, was that the Jews indeed have a genuine oral tradition from Mt. Sinai and that that tradition supports orthodox (i.e., for Allix, Trinitarian, non-Millenarian) Christianity. This Christian tradition in Jewish literature has been purposely obscured by the later Jewish rabbis and it is *their* doctrines which have been adopted by Millenarians and Unitarians, given that these heretics have not learned to discern the true from the false in

⁵⁰ Cambridge University Library, Ms. Add. 2608^a:VII, f. 15r-16r. Quoted by the kind permission of Cambridge University Libraries.

⁵¹ See Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:673.

rabbinic writing. Allix first attacks the anti-Trinitarians, in his *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church Against the Unitarians*. Later, after abandoning a strong Millenarian stance, he comes out against the Millenarians in his *Two Treatises*. It would appear that this is the first instance in which a sophisticated polemical tool developed against Jews was turned against Judaizing Christians, a strategy which Allix was able to support effectively with his great learning.

SARAH HUTTON

One of the cinematographic scenes I vividly remember from my childhood is from the 1950s film of the Antarctic expedition mounted by the British explorer, Captain Scott, in his attempt to become the first man to reach the South Pole. After a wearisome journey through appalling conditions, he arrived at his destination only to find that the Norwegian explorer, Amundsen, had beaten him to it. With his superior knowledge of ice and snow, and a team of dogs, Amundsen triumphed over the resources and might of the British Empire.

When I first met Dick Popkin, I quickly found that our mutual enthusiasm for all the “little people” of intellectual history (characters as diverse as Henry More, William Twisse, and Margaret Fell) provided ground for an otherwise unlikely meeting of minds: for, in other respects, Platonism, my principal research interest, seemed to be a polar opposite to scepticism, the field in which Dick had established his reputation as a scholar. Furthermore, his interest in Judaeo-Christian relations seemed to belong to a different planet from my own field. However, contrary to my expectation (and, I may say, greatly to my satisfaction), I kept finding subsequently that I was running across Popkin wherever I went—either literally (because he had already written definitively on the subject) or in terms of historical framework (in the sense that I found that what had appeared extra-terrestrial to my limited world of Platonists actually turned out to be unavoidable, if not central).

In the paper which I offer for this collection, I again acknowledge that millenarianism and Judaism, just as Dick had foreseen, were integral and important to the thinking of the English Platonists whose intellectual world has become the main focus of my scholarly explorations. I acknowledged this development in my thinking at a conference in Cortona in 1990, where both Dick and I were speakers. When preparing my paper (on Henry Oldenburg and Spinoza), I had found, yet again, that Popkin had been there before me. So I told the audience that I understood the feelings of Captain Scott

when he got to the South Pole and found it covered in the dog-paw prints of Amundsen's expedition. Happily for me, my subsequent fate has not paralleled the tragedy of Scott. Few have had the great privilege of working closely with Dick and learning from his experience. Above all, I have benefited from Dick's generosity, a generosity unparalleled in those parts of the world of contemporary scholarship which I have travelled. I offer my paper *con stima e amicizia*.

MORE, MILLENARIANISM, AND THE MA'ASEH MERKAVAH

Sarah Hutton

Henry More's interest in the Jewish kabbalah is well-attested.¹ One interpretation of More's view of kabbalah is that he moved from an "invented" or speculative kabbalah, which was in essence a Christian and philosophical interpretation of the first book of Genesis (his *Conjectura cabbalistica*) to commentary on genuine kabbalist texts, in the face of which he was forced to rethink his assumptions about what kabbalah actually was. It is certainly the case that he regarded aspects of the genuine kabbalism with deep suspicion. In his *Fundamenta philosophiae*, he condemns Lurianic kabbalism for purveying a materialistic conception of the deity in its account of the creation.² However, in the other writings contributed to Knorr's project, More argues that kabbalah contains elements of pure (and therefore Christian) truth among the dross of Jewish accretions. This is particularly the case with his discussions of Ezekiel 1 and 10. These show More unrepentantly Christian in his interpretations and still writing in the conviction that kabbalah embodies truths of philosophy as well as religion. In spite of his encounter with genuinely kabbalist texts, his conception of kabbalah was of a heritage of occulted wisdom. In this paper I want to demonstrate that More's interest in Judaism can be traced back to his early career and that his view of the nature and significance of Jewish mystical traditions did not significantly change after his encounter with genuine Jewish texts in the 1670s.

More's opinions on the nature and significance of kabbalistic writings were sufficiently well-respected by the leading Christian kabbalist of the seventeenth century, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, for the latter to include commentaries by More in the critical apparatus

¹ Allison Coudert, "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975), pp. 633–52; Stuart Brown, "Leibniz and Henry More's Cabbalistic Circle," in S. Hutton, ed. *Henry More (1614–1687). Tercentenary Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), pp. 77–95.

² Discussed in Coudert, "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare."

published in *Kabbala denudata*.³ More was sufficiently proud of his contribution to publish them in his *Opera omnia*, the Latin edition of his writings published in three folio volumes in 1679.⁴ More's contribution to *Kabbala denudata* is the fullest testimony of his interest in Jewish mystical traditions. It should, however, be remembered that he treated the texts not as mysticism but as philosophy: that is as repositories of ancient truth compiled in veiled form, accessible to rational interpretation by appropriately qualified adepts. (And, as we shall see, he regarded Christians as better qualified than Jews for interpreting the truth hidden in these texts).

More's writings on kabbalah were first printed in the second part of Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata* in 1677, within the critical apparatus he supplied to accompany Knorr's selection from the Zohar. The contributions from More are interspersed among other writings (by Knorr, Naphtali ben Jacob Baharach, Isaac Luria, and Moses Cordovero). In the table of contents they are listed as follows:

- item 1. *Excerpta ex epistola quadam compilatoris, de utilitate versionis libri Sohar.*
- item 2. *Tabulae duae synopticae kabbalisticae quarum altera est clavis sublimioris kabbalae.*
- item 3. *Additus tentatus rationem reddendi Nominum & ordinis decem sepirotharum in duabus tabulis item cabbalisticis ex scriptura, platonismo, rationeque libera D. Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis.*
- item 5. *Quaestiones et considerationes in tract. I. libri Druschim D. Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis; cum ejusdem epistola.*
- item 9. *Ultior disquisitio de rebus in Amica responsione contentis D. Henrici Mori.*
- item 10. *Visionis Ezechielis seu Mercavae expositio ejusdem.*
- item 11. *Fundamenta philosophiae seu cabbalae aeto-paedo-melisseae ejusdem.*

Knorr also prints a Latin version of *A Cabbalistical Dialogue*, though this is not listed in the table of contents: *Ad fundamenta cabbalae aeto-paedo-melisseae dialogus*.

These were all reprinted by More in the second volume of his *Opera omnia* in 1679, but the order is different and, as one might expect, More does not print the pieces that are not his own. More arranges his pieces in groups, each with a separate title page within the volume, as follows:

³ Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, ed. and trans., *Kabbala denudata seu doctrina Hebraeorum transcendentalis et metaphysica atque theologica* (Sulzbach, 1677–84).

⁴ *H. Mori Cantabrigiensis opera omnia*, 3 vols. (London, 1675–1679).

1. *Trium tabularum cabbalisticarum decem sepirothas*, which contains: (a) *Epistola de seu decem sepirotharum sive numerationes exhibentum descriptio*. (This is the *Epistola ad compilatorem* which precedes his discussion of Luria, item 5 in Knorr's list). (b) Three cabbalistical tables with an illustration for and an exposition of each.
2. Then follows Knorr's item 6, *Quaestiones & considerationes paucae brevesque in tractatum primum sive introductionem metaphysicam ad cabbalam genuinam. Authore R. Isaaco Loriensi*, and More's letter to Knorr (item 9, *Ultior disquisitio*), entitled *Ad clarissimum ac eruditissimum virum Christianum Knorrium de rebuts in amica responsione continentis ulterior disquisitio*.
3. Next comes a group of texts relating to the Book of Ezekiel: (a) a summary of Ezekiel 1 and 10, with an illustration of Ezekiel's vision of the chariot and an explanation of it (*In visionem Ezechielis ex textu hebraico brevis et fidelis paraphrasis; Explicatio tabulae visionis Ezechielis*, not in Knorr); (b) *Visionis Ezechielis sive Mercavae expositio, ex principijs philosophiae pythagoricae praecipuisque theosophiae judaicae reliquis concinnata*. (Knorr's item 10). (c) After these comes *Catechismus cabbalisticus sive mercavaeus quo, in divinis mysterijs Mercavae Ezechielis explicandis & memoria refinendis* (The second part of Knorr's item 10).
4. Finally, he prints *Fundamenta philosophiae* but not *A Cabbalistical Dialogue*, to which there is no reference.

In addition, More adds *scholia* to the *Trium tabularum . . . descriptio*, as well as the *scholia* which appear after *Fundamenta philosophiae* in *Kabbala denudata*.

Where in *Kabbala denudata* More's writings appear as sundry commentaries interspersed among kabbalistic texts, in his *Opera omnia*, they fall into four distinct groups. Among these, the texts relating to the Book of Ezekiel are given higher profile by virtue of the fact that More makes additions (not included in the *Kabbala denudata*: he prints Ezekiel 1 and 10, which is illustrated by a striking full page folio depiction of Ezekiel's vision,⁵ along with an explanation of this and several *scholiae*). Although they are not commentaries on existing kabbalist texts, they are clearly intended as a section of More's kabbalistical meditations. Indeed the very title *Catechismus cabbalisticus* suggests this is a distillation of kabbalistic wisdom.

More's knowledge of Hebrew was, on his own admission, imperfect: as he told Lady Conway in 1672, "I freely confess my Ignorance

⁵ This was prepared in November, 1675, with the assistance of Van Helmont. See *The Conway Letters*, ed. M. H. Nicolson and S. Hutton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 405.

in Oriental Tongues and Rabbinicall Learning.”⁶ In another letter, he describes to her his difficulties in making sense of the “Cabbalisticall papys” sent him by Knorr, “it was as if I had lickt a peece of rough iron with my tongue, so little pleasure or savour I found in them. . . .” More’s problems with interpreting kabbalistic texts were as much problems with the mode of writing and the state of the manuscripts he received from Knorr as with the language (Hebrew). He explained to Knorr,

But that MS that is called Emek Hammelech is writh with so many abbreviatures and so small an[d] imperfect a letter that much of it was unlegible to me.⁷

His comments to Lady Conway on the value of publishing kabbalistic texts indicates that he had probably read Hebrew sources before and that he had at least passing acquaintance with the latter:

But I think the publishing of the Zoarasticall writings [i.e. Zohar] will appeare of more moment and more desireable then the Talmudical, they being a greater rarity and of such a nature that few have any ability or genius to deale with them by reason of their invincible obscurity, which if they may be either totally or in a good part dissolved by the paines of Peganius, the Rarity of them, methinks may make them more desireable then those of the Talmud, they being of another nature and more ordinarily known.⁸

At all events, More’s difficulties in reading Hebrew manuscripts did not prevent him from citing or interpreting them: for example he cites the afore-mentioned Emek Hammelech in his *Mercavae expositio*.⁹

By the time More’s *Opera omnia* was published, he and Lady Conway had been studying the kabbalah for some time. His correspondence with her records his excitement on receiving kabbalistic material supplied by Van Helmont from Knorr and his frustration at the problems he encountered when trying to read it! This excitement clearly arose not from the shock of the new, but from the fact that he was learning more about something of which he had some knowledge already: kabbalah was not new for More, since he was aware

⁶ More to Lady Conway, 21 March, 1671–2, *Conway Letters*, p. 355.

⁷ *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 173. More is referring to *Emek Ha-Melekh* (“The Mystical Depths of the King”) by Naphtali ben Jacob Baharach published 1648 and printed in *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2.

⁸ More to Lady Conway, 11 August, 1674, *Conway Letters*, p. 390.

⁹ *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 265.

of it through Jewish and Christian sources already and had even speculatively reconstructed kabbalist wisdom many years before in his book *Conjectura cabbalistica* (1653). While More undoubtedly knew such Christian kabbalist sources as Joannes Reuchlin, Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Joannes Rittangel, and Robert Fludd,¹⁰ he was aware of the existence of esoteric Jewish traditions through Menasseh Ben Israel¹¹ and Maimonides, as well as the Jewish sources cited in *Conjectura cabbalistica*. Indeed More cites Menasseh in one of his earliest publications, his poem, "The Praeexistency of the Soul" in his *Philosophical Poems* (1647). Here More cites Manasseh ben Israel, *De creatione problemata XXX* (Amsterdam, 1635) in the "Preface to the Reader." Years later, before he met Van Helmont, he included an account of Ezekiel's vision of the chariot, the *merkavah*, in his *Divine Dialogues* (1668).

Although More clearly knew of the existence of kabbalah through secondary sources, it is difficult to be sure whether he had any direct acquaintance with kabbalistic or other mystical texts in the Jewish tradition. His excitement on receiving the materials Van Helmont brought him suggests that he hadn't. At all events, continued references in his writings to this type of tradition suggests that he continued to speculate on its significance. Furthermore, kabbalistic ideas inform his own philosophical discussions—particularly his concept of infinite space.¹² And More's exegetical techniques for interpreting the bible show that he was well adapted to meeting the challenge of symbolic reading: his interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John uses the idea that texts have an external shell (cortex) which masks deeper inward meaning (medulla), an interpretative premise of kabbalism.¹³

As already mentioned, More's writings on Jewish mystical tradi-

¹⁰ See J. Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944). F. Secret, *Les kabbalistes chrétiennes de la Renaissance* (Paris: Dunod, 1964).

¹¹ The Amsterdam Rabbi, Manasseh ben Israel, was an important source for gentile knowledge of Judaism in More's day and a key figure in negotiations for the readmission of the Jews to England in the Protectorate. See Y. Kaplan, H. Méchoulan, Richard H. Popkin, *Menasseh ben Israel and his World* (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

¹² See Brian Copenhaver, "Jewish Theologies of space in the Scientific Revolution: Henry More, Joseph Raphson, Isaac Newton and their Predecessors," *Annals of Science* 37 (1980), pp. 489–548.

¹³ On More's interpretative technique, see Hutton, "More, Newton and the Language of Biblical Prophecy," in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin, *The Books of Nature and Scripture. Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy, Theology, and Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands of Spinoza's Time and the British Isles of Newton's Time* (Dordrecht:

tions published in his *Opera omnia* include a group relating to the interpretation of the *merkavah*, Ezekiel's vision of the chariot: starting with *Visionis Ezechielis seu Mercavae expositio ejusdem*. The subtitle of this explicitly links the *merkavah* with Pythagoreanism: *Visionis Ezechielis sive Mercavae expositio, ex principiis philosophiae pythagoricae praecipuisque theosophiae judaeae reliquis concinnata*. (*The vision of Ezekiel or exposition of the Mercava through the principles of Pythagorean philosophy*). This is followed by a piece whose title links Ezekiel's vision explicitly with kabbalah: *Catechismus cabbalisticus sive mercavaeus quo, in divinis mysteriis Mercavae Ezechielis explicandis & memoria refinendis decem sepirotharum usus egregie illustratur*. (*The Cabbalistical or Merkavan Catechism in which the use of the ten sepiroth is excellently illustrated in an explanation and account of the Mercava of Ezekiel*). The inclusion of commentaries on the book of Ezekiel was something of a departure from More's other contributions to Knorr's collection, since the text commented upon was biblical rather than kabbalist. Besides, as Scholem has demonstrated, Merkavah Mysticism represents an ancient strand of Talmudic mysticism which predates kabbalah and, in Scholem's view, represented a different type of mysticism from the more contemplative mysticism of kabbalah.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the central image of the chariot/throne is incorporated within kabbalist writings. Indeed, according to Werblowsky, the kabbalah merges with *ma'aseh merkavah*, the "works of the chariot" understood as the mystery of sephirotic life.¹⁵ And to the Christian kabbalists of the Renaissance *ma'aseh merkavah* incorporated the wisdom of nature, the counterpart of *ma'aseh bereshith*, "the works of creation" understood as knowledge of the divine.¹⁶ This may explain why More felt it was important to study the *ma'aseh merkavah* or "works of the throne/chariot," especially since he appears to believe he had successfully unlocked the secrets of *ma'aseh bereshit* or "the works of creation." In 1675, in a letter to Knorr published in English

Kluwer, 1994). On the "nut" and "kernel" in Jewish mystical exegesis, see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 5th printing, 1971), p. 207. Idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 247.

¹⁴ Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 44–55. See also idem, "Merkabah Mysticism or Ma'aseh Merkavah," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), Vol. 11, cols. 1386–9.

¹⁵ R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 18 (1955), pp. 50–113.

¹⁶ Cf. Reuchlin, "Le Ma'ase Bereshith est la sagesse de la nature, et le ma'ase Mercava est la sagesse de la divinité," quoted in *Secret*.

in the *Kabbala denudata*, he wrote to Knorr about his interpretation of the merkavah:

I intend to take occasion . . . to hint something toward the finding out what may be the sound and irrefutable meaning of the Mercabah, as I do not much diffide, but that I have hitt on the true Cabbala of their Bereshit. In which I suppose a Creation properly so called.¹⁷

Quite what More is referring to by the term "Bereshit" is not clear: he could be making a specific reference to that part of the Zohar that deals with what in the Christian bible would be Genesis 1.6. In view of the limited extent of historical understanding of these traditions at that time, and of More's own knowledge of Jewish sources, it is unlikely that he was referring to the ma'aseh bereshit, "the work of creation" which constituted an important element of the Jewish mysticism predating kabbalah. Moreover, he uses the term "cabbala" loosely to mean secret or hidden wisdom. At all events, in his 1675 letter to Knorr, he claims that "the true Cabbala of their Bereshit" is one which involves an account of creation, whereas the Jewish interpretation "denyes Creation properly so-called" because of its materialist account of God and spiritual beings. This shows that, whatever More understands by "Bereshith" is some kind of account of the beginning of things. Most probably he had in mind his own kabbalistical conjectures, his *Conjectura cabbalistica* (1653) which comprises as series of commentaries (literal, moral and philosophical) on the first Book of Genesis.

More's statement to Knorr also shows that he links merkavah with kabbalah. Indeed, he makes the claim that the merkavah holds the key to the true understanding of kabbalah. This is a claim which is elaborated in his exposition of Ezekiel's vision (*Visionis Ezechieliticae sive Mercavae expositio*) where he talks of "the kabbalah of the Merkavah (*"Cabbala Mercavae"*) and asserts that this contains "the highest mysteries that can be conceived, scarcely credible in vulgar philosophy."¹⁸ This is then followed by the *Catechismus cabbalisticus* which sets out to demonstrate the application of the Mercava of Ezekiel to the ten sepiroth. The textual source for the merkavah is the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel (he prints books 1 and 10 of this before his account

¹⁷ *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 174.

¹⁸ "In Cabbala *Mercavae* summa contineri, quae concipi possunt, & profundissima Mysteria, vulgarique Philosopho vix credibilia," *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 225.

of the merkavah in his *Opera Omnia*). But More's conviction that the merkavah was a source of profoundly arcane wisdom was no doubt gathered from, or at least supported by, Origen's statement that among the Jews only mature men and not novices were allowed to read it.¹⁹ More was an admirer of Origen, in spite of the heterodoxy of much of Origen's teaching.²⁰ Furthermore, in Maimonides' *More Nevochim*, More found a precedent for his philosophical readings of Ezekiel's vision. Indeed, Maimonides was clearly a key source for his knowledge of Jewish interpretation of Ezekiel's vision: it is Maimonides' source, Jonathan ben Uzziel, whom More cites for his treatment of the topic in *Divine Dialogues* (1668)—in spite of the fact that he believed that the philosophical superstructure that Maimonides erected out of the merkavah was wrong.

In *Divine Dialogues*, More introduces a discussion of the merkavah just after an account of the significance of the seven vials of the Apocalypse of St. John. One of his interlocutors, Philopolis, asks, "are there not more particular Prefigurations in the Prophetical Writings touching the state of the church?"²¹ In his reply, Philotheus cites Ezekiel's vision as an example and links it directly to St. John's vision of the throne in heaven. Just as St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem is "the very City that Ezechiel saw" (as described in Ezekiel 48.31), so also the throne of Revelation 4.2 is prefigured in Ezekiel's vision of the throne/chariot as a "Heavenly Idea of the state of the Church." The merkavah is "the Pattern of the Angelicall Polity over which God immediately rules," demonstrating the aim of Divine Providence "to reduce the Church to an Angelicall state or condition, that it may answer that Heavenly Pattern in the Visions of God."²² More's Jewish sources notwithstanding, he insists on a Christian interpretation of the texts in question: the rider in the chariot is the Son of God whose name is written in Amber, "if you reade it Cab-

¹⁹ Origen, "In canticum canticorum prologus," in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 13, col. 675. Origen's statement is regarded as authoritative even today. It is cited by Scholem, *Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965) and David J. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (Newhaven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1980).

²⁰ See. S. Hutton, "Henry More and Anne Conway on Preexistence and Universal Salvation," in M. Baldi, *Mind Senior to the World. Stoicismo e origenismo nella filosofia platonica del Seicento inglese* (Milan: Francoangelli, 1996), pp. 113–26.

²¹ *Divine Dialogues* (London, 1668), Dialogue 5, p. 265.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 280–2.

balistically.”²³ As the “glorious State of the Kingdome of Christ after the utter Destruction of Babylon,”²⁴ the merkavah is also an interpretation which he later described as “ethico-political” (“*Expositionem Mercavae Ethico-Politicam, qualem exhibui in Divinis Dialogis*”).²⁵ More’s interpretation also expresses his own millenarianism, in so far as he believed that the millennium would be ushered in when the church had been restored to its pristine condition and Christians purified in heart. Furthermore, he insists that only Christians can interpret these texts correctly. The significance of the vision was lost on the ancient Hebrews, apart from the prophets, but figured as a visual emblem, an image that could be seen, even if it could not be understood: “Thus did God in those days bear the Heavenly Type in an earthly and carnal manner. . . . He began therefore his true Cherubicall or Angelicall Dispensation amongst his Apostles and Disciples . . . [when] the pattern of Perfection was again recorded in the Vision of St. John.”²⁶ The Jews of the Old Testament were not able to understand Ezekiel’s vision: although it served as a manifestation of the divine, it was not until apostolic times that the spiritual significance of such visions was made manifest.

More’s Christian agenda notwithstanding, he nonetheless drew on Jewish sources for the interpretation of the merkavah. As already mentioned, in *Divine Dialogues* he cites Maimonides. In his later discussions of the subject he uses the Sepiroth to unlock the secrets of Ezekiel’s vision. This is a clear example of the impact of his encounter with the kabbalistic texts supplied by Knorr. Furthermore, while More shared Knorr’s hope of finding a way to convert the Jews to Christianity via the kabbalah, there was also a philosophical dimension to his interest in Jewish sources which was extremely important to him. Just as his own *Conjectura cabbalistica* entailed a philosophical exposition of the first book of Genesis as well as a literal and a moral one, so also his reading of Jewish mystical texts had a philosophical as well as a theological dimension. Indeed this was, arguably the primary interest of these texts for More: after all, when he published them in his *Opera omnia*, he included them in the second philosophical volume, not in the theological volume. They are printed

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 258

²⁵ *Visionis Ezechielis, sive Mercavae exposition, Opera omnia* (London, 1679), Vol. 2, p. 487.

²⁶ *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, pp. 298–9.

after his discussion of the teutonic philosophy of Jacob Boehme (*Philosophia teutonica censura*) and before his critique of Spinoza. This dubious company (for in More's eyes both of these were the authors of questionable, if not unacceptable, philosophical systems) indicates a common tendency in all of them, namely a propensity to materialism.²⁷

In his later interpretations of the merkavah (those included in *Kabbala denudata*), More retains the view that Ezekiel's vision refers to Christ. However, he acknowledges major differences from his earlier discussions of the merkavah in *Divine Dialogues*. And the main difference consists in its new philosophical dimension, which is clearly the outcome of his use of kabbalah. Referring to his earlier ethico-political reading of Ezekiel 1, More observes that he has reached a "metaphysical or theosophical" ("metaphysicam vel theosophicam") interpretation in place of "the ethico-political interpretation" of Ezekiel's vision, he writes that it:

is undoubtedly the most pretious foundation of the ancient metaphysical kabbalah on which all metaphysical truths are based, or at least they are related to it.²⁸

The key to unlocking these truths is the Pythagorean decad, which, More claims is the same that the Jews call the ten Sepirot. ("Cuius rei eximium puto fuisse instrumentum decem Numeros, quos *Graeci Cabbalistae Denarium Pythagoricum*, *Hebraei decem Sepirot* nominant.")²⁹ More's Exposition of the merkavah consists in a series of philosophical postulates followed by fifty-two questions about different parts of the vision, for which he supplies the answers. The postulates set out tenets of the ancient Pythagorean philosophy which is also preserved in Jewish theosophy and Cartesianism. This philosophical framework is exactly that used by More in his *Conjectura cabbalistica*. Taking as his starting point the postulate that "The kabbalah of the merkavah

²⁷ See my articles, "Henry More and Jacob Boehme," in Hutton, *Henry More*, pp. 158–71, and "Reason and Revelation in the Cambridge Platonists and their Reception of Spinoza," in K. Grunder and W. Schmidt-Biggeman, eds., *Spinoza in der Frühzeit seiner Reliösen Wirkung* (Wolfenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung, 12), pp. 181–99. See, for example *Quaestiones & considerationes . . . libri Druschim*, Book 2 where he argues that the Lurianic idea of *tsimtsum*, implies a crass and corporeal Deity (*Aen-sof*). *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 65.

²⁸ "Quae procul dubio Veteris *Cabbalae Metaphysicae* pretiosissima est Fodina. Ex qua omnes veritates *Metaphysicae* ullius momenti effodiendae sunt, aut saltem comode ad eam referendae." *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 271.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

contains the highest and most profound Mysteries that can be conceived and are scarcely credible in vulgar philosophy.”³⁰ The elements of this philosophy include Cartesian tenets, such as the vortices of planetary motion, and doctrines particular to More’s own philosophical and religious views, most notably the theory of the pre-existence of souls and the hypothesis of the Spirit of Nature. The idea that kabbalism was a version of Pythagoreanism is a commonplace of Christian kabbalism of the Renaissance³¹ and governs all More’s writings on kabbalah, including the *Conjectura*. His “recognition” of his own theories in these texts is also consistent with his position in the *Conjectura* and is consonant with the view that he expressed to Lady Conway in 1672, “I am pleased y^t in some few places it is so consonant to my Metaphysicks.”³² This explains More’s interpretation of the four worlds “siluth, Beriah, Yetsirah, Asiyah” on the one hand as vortices of planetary motion and on the other as expressive of his pneumatology, particularly the acquisition by souls of corporeal vehicles before their descent into bodies and of the transmigration of souls. The consistent theme of More’s exposition of Ezekiel’s vision is to support his general interpretation that the vision represents the spiritual reign of the Messiah—an interpretation which accords with his position in *Divine Dialogues*. This interpretation is set out more succinctly in *Catechismus cabbalisticus* where More contends that the overall significance of Ezekiel’s vision is “the spiritual reign of the God of Israel as God of Israel” (“Regnum Spirituale DEI Israelis quatenus DEI Israelis”).³³ The *Catechismus* is shorter than the *Expositio* but it, too, is organised as a set of questions and answers, this time twelve in number. More gives a distinctively Christian gloss to his understanding of “the spiritual reign of the God is Israel,” which, he says, is none other than “the soul of the Messiah in one person united with the second person of the Godhead”—that is Christ (“Anima Messiae in unam personam . . . cum secunda

³⁰ “In Cabbala Mercavae summa contineri, quae concipi possunt & profundissima Mysteria, vulgarique Philosopho vix credibilia,” *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 225.

³¹ Blau, *Christian Interpretation of the Cabala and Secret, Kabbalistes chrétiennes*. One of More’s sources was Joannes Meursius, *Denarius Pythagoricus, sive, de numerorum usque ad denarium qualitate ac nominibus, secundum Pythagoricos* (Leiden, 1631) which expounds the symbolism of the numbers 1 through 10. Meursius’ sources are classical, not Jewish, however.

³² *Conway Letters*, p. 530. This may explain why Knorr decided to translate More’s *Enchiridion metaphysicum* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1980).

³³ *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 274.

persona *Divinitatis* coalescens").³⁴ Then follows an exposition of the meaning of the Sepirot that accords with More's Pythagorean cabalistical table, where the first three are interpreted as the three persons of the Trinity and the rest as aspects of the glorious reign of Christ, summed up in the tenth sepirah, *malkuth*. Among the meanings of the sepirot, *Gedulah* is said to represent the extent or amplitude of Christ's Kingdom and the four worlds of *shekinah* are said to be symbolised by the four cherubim which are also a symbol of the extent of Christ's Kingdom.

A millennial dimension, is implicit in the *Expositio*, becoming explicit on occasion. For instance, More invokes Calvin to argue that the figure in Ezekiel 1 is Christ, the second person of the Trinity, represented in the same way as in Daniel's vision, namely as the ancient of days:

Atque profecto ipse *Cabirus* Hominem hunc Throno insidentem Christum esse enixè contendit, aptisque Sacrae Scripturae locis confirmat. Nam sub hac forma repraesentatum esse in Visione *Danielis* secundamque Trinitatis personam ibi referre statuit, ut Antiquus Dierum primam, quid autem in hac *Ezechielitica* Visione primam personam referat, mox notabimus.³⁵

This millennial dimension is further underlined in the *Catechismus*, for the kingdom of the God of Israel is the Kingdom of Christ. The eighth *sepirah*, *Hod*, is the pomp and triumph of the reign of the Messiah after his victories. The ninth *sepirah*, *Yesod*, is the duration of the Messiah's kingdom after the founding of *Mundus Asiaticus*, or the incarnation and descent of the Messiah (p. 277). By reference to a hymn of Synesius, More applies this to the blessed millennium ("beatum *Millennium*"): "it will be the resurrection of Justice (which was miserably destroyed and oppressed under the reign of the seven-headed beast and the pseudoprophets) in those last days, especially during the last Trumpet in that resulting Millenium."³⁶

The hidden message or "cabbala" of Ezekiel's vision is thus a Christian revelation. By perceiving this it is, in More's opinion, possible to come to a right understanding of the essence of kabbalah,

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Mercavae Expositio*, in *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 263.

³⁶ "Resurrectio quasi erit Justitiae (quae misere occisa erat & oppressa sub regno Bestiae septicipitis & Pseudoprophetae) in diebus illius, puta posterioribus, praesertim intra Tubam ultimam, in ipso utique Millenio." *Ibid.*, p. 287.

that is of the ten *sepiroth*. The "catechism" that gives his interpretation is an exposition of the true manifestation of the Deity through the Son: the divine displayed in triune splendour and given outward glory in Christ's kingdom, in the extent (*Gedulah*), power (*Geburah*), political and military order (*Tiphereth*), victory (*Hod*), and durability (*Jesod*) of that kingdom expressed by the penultimate six *sepiroth* and summed up in the tenth, *Malcuth*.³⁷

We should not lose sight of the fact that the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom: this is in keeping with More's own interpretation of the apocalypse which placed emphasis on spiritual regeneration rather than a historically future kingdom on earth.³⁸ In his *Opera omnia* More added a *scholium* to his *Expositio* which underlines spiritual regeneration, or the new birth in Christ. Although this glosses only one item (quaesto 42), it is a major addition because it runs to six folio pages. In the answer to question 42 in the *Expositio*, More explains the significance of the fiery amber aura surrounding the figure on the throne (Ezekiel 1.27). In doing so he links it with the pure transparent gold of which the New Jerusalem is composed in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 21). And, by reference to Postulate IV of the *Expositio*, he identifies it with the vehicle of the spirit of Christ as *logos*. In Postulate IV, More had posited two material elements in the world, one natural, subject to the Spirit of Nature, the other Divine, which constituted the vehicle of the holy spirit.³⁹ In the *scholium* to question 42 added in his *Opera omnia*, More sets out to explain the interaction of these spirits in the process of regeneration or "new birth" in Christ. Regeneration, he says, entails the union of the divine with the human, which is possible on account of the nature of spirit. Just as our "birth" in an earthly body involves a vital union of the plastic part of the soul with the corruptible, material body, so also, regeneration involves a union of the same plastic part of the soul with the "divine material" which is the vehicle of the eternal spirit:

Regeneration is the vital union of the plastic part of our souls with this divine matter, equally real and substantial, just as that vital union with terrestrial matter, was really and substantially its generation. And just as our terrestrial union directs us towards undignified and sordid

³⁷ I have used More's nomenclature and orthography for the ten *sepiroth*.

³⁸ See Hutton, "More, Newton . . .".

³⁹ *Kabbala denudata*, Pt. 2, p. 264.

things, at the same time inspired and animated by the spirit of nature, so our union with this divine body, in which the more divine faculties of the soul are awakened, seizes us and carries us towards the heaven and fills us with all kinds of holy actions and sensations, with the eternal spirit stimulating and strengthening us.⁴⁰

In this way More attempts to explain how the eternal spirit of the *logos* interacts with the human soul and the human body. Through the doctrine of the vehicle of the soul, this is both a pneumatological and a physical theory of interaction. It is a theory which sustains an explanation of the mystery of consubstantiation (More discusses the relevant biblical texts, though he does not use that term). Although he is at pains to distinguish this “divine matter” from the “eternal spirit” itself, More is dangerously unorthodox in his talk of the body of God. This “spiritual body” is the “sal divinum”, the “salt of divinity,” which consitutes the “material principle” of the new birth. Regeneration of the internal man consists in union with a new body. The cross-references in this lengthy *scholium* are all to More’s own writings, to places where he had elaborated aspects of his theory more fully—*An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (1660), *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), *Divine Dialogues*. The argument in the *scholium* to question 42 is thus a distillation of his philosophy as well as a gloss on the spiritual dimension of the reign of Christ.

There is no doubt that More’s interpretation of the merkavah was out of line with Jewish traditions on account of his perception of a Christian content in it (especially his treatment of it as a vision of Christ and an adumbration of the doctrine of the Trinity).⁴¹ Although More brought a Christian interpretative apparatus to his reading of the vision, he undoubtedly picked up on what Scholem has termed

⁴⁰ “Quamobrem vitalis unio Plasticae partis animarum nostrarum cum hac Divina materia aequae realis ac substantialis Regeneratio est Animae, atq; illius unio vitalis cum terrestri materia realis erat ac substantialis illius Generatio. Et quemadmodum terrestris nostra unio nos ad res indignas sordidasque propellit, Spiritu simul Naturae incitante & animante; ita unio nostra cum Divino hoc corpore, in quo Diviniores Animae facultates expergefiunt, sursum nos coelum versus rapit atque evehit nosq; omni genere actionum & sensationum sanctarum implet, aeterno Spiritu nos ad hoc instigante & corroborante. . . .” *Opera omnia* 2, p. 502.

⁴¹ This rests on the assumption that Ezekiel’s vision admitted of symbolic interpretation in the first place, and was cosmogonic in content. According to Gershom Scholem, the throne world of the merkavah is cosmological rather than cosmogonic and the hekhaloth literature contains no symbolic interpretation of the merkavah, which is ecstatic above all else. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 73–9.

"apocalyptic nostalgia" pervading merkavah mysticism. That More should link Ezekiel's vision with that of St. John in the Book of Revelation is understandable, since the Apocalypse is acknowledged to incorporate elements from the merkavah.⁴²

It is important to recognise that the question of whether or not More was correct in his interpretation of the merkavah, or in his interpretative approach, is not relevant here. What is of interest is his view that Ezekiel's vision embodied ancient wisdom preserved within Jewish traditions and his belief that it should be interpreted as containing hidden truths. Given his Christian perspective, it was inevitable that he should believe that these truths included the highest mysteries of Christianity, that the Godhead therein symbolically represented was the triune God of the Christian Trinity. It followed also that the Jews were not able to provide a true interpretation of their own esoteric traditions: only Christians could do that. However, the importance of this for the likes of More and Knorr was that by persuading the Jews of the true message of merkavah and kabbalah, they could win them over to Christianity. More's Christian standpoint notwithstanding, we should be careful not to overlook the heterodox elements in his exposition. And this is thrown into focus in the *scholium* which he added to the version which appeared in his *Opera omnia*.

More's study of Ezekiel's vision, which was published after the appearance of the first two parts of Knorr's *Kabbala denudata* is his fullest statement of the significance of Jewish mystical texts. It seems clear that, although he may have enriched his knowledge, he did not substantially change his view that kabbalah was a debased form of ancient Pythagoreanism. It is easy to put a negative construction on More's self-consistency here. Even if More sounds dogmatic in his adherence to this position, the story of his encounter with kabbalah is nonetheless the story of the assimilation of one culture into another. For one thing, the form of kabbalah to which Knorr introduced him was already heavily Platonised.⁴³ More did indeed use kabbalah as an opportunity to expound his own theories, including

⁴² See Ithamar Grunewald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980).

⁴³ For example, one of the texts printed by Knorr was the *Puerta del Cielo* by Isaac Cohen Herrera (c. 1635 or 1639), who mixed Neoplatonism with kabbalism and helped mold the 17th-century view of Kabbalism. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 257.

his theory that it was corrupted Pythagoreanism. But that very opportunity was one which offered him the chance to propound his theories in new ways or, at least, in new terms. The mystical and symbolic vocabulary afforded him by kabbalist traditions was certainly not the language of the future for early modern philosophy. The usefulness of that language was not its lucidity (opacity is the hallmark of occulted truth) but the fact that it was not value-free. Its apparent derivation from the mists of antiquity endowed it with authority. In his *Conjectura cabbalistica*, More had constructed a philosophical subtext for the first book of Genesis. This was one way of giving theological approval to his philosophical enterprise, for the philosophy so constructed exhibited, in its fundamentals, More's own blend of Cartesianism and Platonic metaphysics. For his exposition of the first book of Ezekiel, More had genuine kabbalistic texts to hand. Nonetheless he interpreted them in a way which confirmed his earlier kabbalistical conjectures. But in revealing the inner "christian" core of Ezekiel's vision and the ten sepiroth, he confirmed, to his own satisfaction, the ancient truth of Christianity through the ancient Jewish record.

In both the *Conjectura* and his discussions of the merkavah, More's interpretations were governed by a predetermined framework. From the point of view of interpretative authenticity it is easy to say More was "wrong" or even "irrelevant." Even so, between them More's interpretation of Ezekiel's vision, which focuses on the divinity of Christ, and his *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, with its an exposition of the truths of philosophy, give us his own version of the essence of "the ancient Pythagorick or Judaick Cabbala." The scope of his studies of kabbalah extends on the one hand to *ma'aseh merkavah*, the works of the Chariot, and on the other to *ma'aseh bereshit*, the works of creation. These could be described in the terms in which More characterised "the ancient Pythagorick or Judaick Cabbala," "the latter being as it were the Body, the other the Soul of that Philosophy." These words were actually a description of the essence of his own philosophy, the blend of "Platonisme and Cartesianisme" which More himself propounded. More summed up his philosophico-religious project in relation to the kabbalah in the Preface General to his *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings* (1662)—"And therefore I do not a little please my self in that I have made some progress towards resuscitating that ancient and venerable wisdom again, and the bringing together, as it were, of the Soul and Body of Moses,

fitly investing him or cloathing him with the Covering of his own most sacred text.”⁴⁴ If Ezekiel’s name were inserted alongside that of Moses, this would be a summary statement of his entire kabbalist project and could have served as a motto for the second volume of his *Opera omnia*.

⁴⁴ More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings* (London, 1662), The Preface General, p. xix.

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I first read Dick Popkin's *History of Skepticism* in early 1985 when I embarked upon a Ph.D. on Newton's religion at Cambridge. Although a relative newcomer to the period and to the topic, I was struck by the way in which Popkin related the intellectual battles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to the religious disputes of the same period—and I have not forgotten the effect on me of reading of Veron's "machine of war." I completed a Ph.D. early in 1989, not realizing that there had been a 'miraculous conjunction' in that Dick and Jim Force had at the same time embarked upon their own odysseys into the byzantine complexity of Newton's peculiar brand of Christianity. The following summer I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to spend a month at Leiden at an extraordinary four week seminar organized by Dick Popkin, Constance Blackwell and others on the history of the clandestine manuscript *La Traité des Trois Imposteurs*. Although I had seen him speak at Christ's College Cambridge on the tercentenary of Ralph Cudworth's death in 1688, Leiden gave me the chance to meet him for the first time, as well as to read his fascinating Warts'n all autobiography.

This conference, which enabled me to meet intellectual historians from all over Europe and America, showed Dick's skills to the full; he was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable master of ceremonies and was open to discussion of the entire range of intellectual history from the Renaissance to the late eighteenth century. The meeting was a fantastic opportunity for young historians to discuss issues with leading scholars such as Dick and Margaret Jacob, though I recall that many of us spent an inordinate amount of time following the soccer World Cup then taking place in Italy. There too Justin Champion and I learned of Dick's views on Brits, which showed that there were some cultures which even he found too outlandish to analyse (Dick—you won't learn about cricket by reading its laws; you have to sit through hours of tedium). He never lost his sense of humour, and especially not when he received a thirty page missive on his portable fax machine from a lawyer (acting on behalf of a disgruntled scholar)

which threatened him with legal action for a review that had fallen short of the requisite idolatry. I should also add that he was generous enough to lend me some money while in Holland and was not shy in reminding me of the fact when I failed to repay him.

In the mean time I had been given a place at the William Andrews Clark Library, Los Angeles for 1990–1; there, just before Desert Storm and Saddam Hussein's attempts to trigger Armageddon by blackening out the sky with burning oil, I gave a paper on Newton's views on the apocalypse in surreal circumstances. Dick and Julie kindly invited me to their home in Pacific Palisades on which day it rained for the first time since I had arrived in L.A. I drove for the first time on my own to their home and then promptly drained the battery while sampling their hospitality. On the occasions when we have met since, he has always asked about the progress of my own research, particularly regarding Newton's religion, and has never lost his enthusiasm for the latest work in the many areas in which he has an interest.

Dick's own work, whether on the Catholic reception of Sextus Empiricus or on the religion of Spinoza, shows that intellectual history can be exciting and can be situated in its own time without doing a disservice to the complexity of an individual's thought. Perhaps most importantly, he has never failed to encourage younger historians or to give advice on possible areas of research, an openness which is often lacking in older generations of scholars who can be somewhat possessive of certain archives and tend to look on many new trends as pointless and destructive. I salute Dick Popkin's influence on the profession and hope to have many more discussions with him on Newton, The Second Oswald and the 1966 World Cup.

LYING WONDERS AND JUGGLING TRICKS:
RELIGION, NATURE, AND IMPOSTURE
IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Rob Iliffe

Section 1. Introduction

In his magisterial work on scepticism, Richard Popkin depicted a post-Reformation culture beset with doubts about religious belief and in the throes of an “intellectual crisis.” In both the secular and religious spheres, old certainties disappeared as individuals used powerful techniques to unravel the basis of their enemies’ belief. While secular sceptical arguments concentrated on dismantling the certainty that could be gained by means of the use of reason and the senses, Protestants and Catholics vied to destroy each other’s criterion for determining true faith from false. Protestants tended to deny that there had been any miracles performed on earth after the apostolic age ended in the fourth century A.D. and they condemned the notion that a religious claim could be authorized by Church tradition, the pope, or by councils. Instead, one ought to read Scripture according to one’s conscience while under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Catholics responded after the Council of Trent with devastating arguments which stressed the difficulty of many passages in Scripture and which warned of the dangerous anarchy attending a community of believers who had no other source of authority for their religious beliefs than their own various consciences. Only divinely guided tradition could guarantee that the meaning of Christianity had remained untainted since the time when Christ preached up to the present day. Protestants all disagreed amongst themselves and could not even be certain that their own Bibles were remotely authentic, and they had no modern miracles to attest to the truth of their faith. Protestants responded by asking how Catholics could *know* that the pope was the true pope and be *certain* that their tradition was the true one, and so on.¹

¹ Richard H. Popkin, *Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley and Los Angeles:

However, in England Protestants grew increasingly concerned about varieties of their faith which tended towards dogmatic and delusional enthusiasm, on the one hand, and to a quasi-popish reliance upon ceremony and outward displays, on the other. Both of these raised spectres of imposture and fraud. The enthusiast was deluded as to the certainty of his beliefs while, on the other hand, Protestants were repeatedly told to beware of any kind of priestly authority which abused images or ceremony, situations in which the innocent laity were inevitably drawn towards the worship of images and ultimately to idolatry. In each case there was what Jean-Christophe Agnew has called a "crisis of representation," a situation in which individuals struggled to detect the true and authentic from the false or fraudulent. In their compelling analyses of this phenomenon, Agnew, Stephen Greenblatt, and Jonas Barish have all pointed to the sense of suspicion and threat which Protestant cultures experienced with regard to exteriority and insincerity in the late sixteenth century. This culminated in the numerous critiques of the theatrical space which turned the world upside down and inside out and which deconstructed traditional notions of authenticity, accountability, and intentionality. Preaching the virtues of hard work and honesty, English Protestant writers attempted to stem the baneful effects of the mainly Italian writings from Machiavelli, Castiglione, and Guazzo which apparently celebrated the arts of hypocrisy and dissembling. At the same time, they attacked the immorality and dissimulation of the acting profession which threatened to spill off the stage into the world, thereby creating a perverted *theatrum mundi*.²

This deeply entrenched anti-Catholicism and anti-theatricalism of many sections of English society ensured that the works which were produced in Catholic court cultures—both in terms of illusory opti-

University of California Press, 1979), pp. 1–17, and, for Catholic sceptical arguments of the late sixteenth century, see especially idem, "Skepticism and the Counter-Reformation in France," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 51 (1960), pp. 58–86. For Protestant attitudes to miracles see D. P. Walker, "The Cessation of Miracles," in I. Merkel and A. Debus, eds., *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, Folger Institute Symposia (Wash. D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988), pp. 111–23.

² J. Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); S. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); J. Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981) and K. E. Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

cal displays and in books depicting proper court etiquette—were read as “convenient symbols of shrewd, almost magical manipulation.” Protestants saw the spectre of imposture everywhere and, as Agnew points out, terms such as *cunning*, *art*, and *craft* were transformed from their older artisanal meanings to “imply a capacity for misrepresentation and treachery that, by the late sixteenth century at least, was properly identified with Machiavellianism.” Even the word *performance* itself came to acquire the connotation of fraud, imposture, and misrepresentation, implying a disjunction between the (godly) self and the public person, while Shakespeare gave the harmless word *act* its modern, thespian meaning. The usage of the word *actor* was duly changed in the same way and the term *plot* combined the older more sinister meaning with the newer theatrical one. In the increasingly farcical situation in which all the world had become a stage, the word *prestige* developed overtones of power or status, an almost complete perversion of its original French meaning of conjuror or illusion. Similarly, the words *charlatan*, *mountebank*, and *quack* took on their respective connotations of deception. The godly Protestant of the period needed a handbook of sorts to guide his way through what Agnew aptly calls the “histrionic calculus” and authors duly provided them.³

Although it had been the poor people to whom miracles had been revealed in Biblical times, Protestant elites could not now trust this gullible group to testify to the miraculous quality of events whose natural basis, and hence lack of miraculous significance, they did not understand. This raised a problem, for while Protestants condemned the lazy reliance placed by the Catholic laity upon the authority of their priests, they had to accept that portions of the Bible were inexorably inaccessible to the puny intellects of the vulgar. As in the case of Scripture, so for natural events which could only be understood by experts in astronomy and natural philosophy. Even though their faith could allow them to trust their senses in most cases, the vulgar, irrevocably deluded by these same senses, needed priests of nature to determine the real difference in size between the sun, the stars, and the moon, and to tell whether the earth went around the sun or vice versa. As I suggest in this paper, Protestants of all degrees of sophistication were increasingly held to have an obligation to

³ Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, pp. 76, 83, 98, 133 and 61; P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), p. 273.

deconstruct false miracles and to see through imposture—so long as they also had an adequate understanding of what was *natural*. Thus, in addition to the techniques for uncovering hypocrisy and exhibitionism, even the most simple of the godly had to have a minimal grasp of the natural order in order to be able to tell whether examples of witchcraft or unexpected medical cures were miracles, marvels, juggling tricks, or the result of the grace of God, an overactive imagination, or even a demon. The same heightened common sense that could allow one to see that a Quaker was a Jesuit in disguise could also be used to good effect in showing that a pretended miracle was not so.⁴

Such developments were also deeply bound up with the pan-European process which witnessed new divisions between elites and plebians at the end of the sixteenth century, as new urban classes sought to distance themselves from the “errors” of the vulgar. Although academics in Western Europe had always referred to a common “herd” who were incapable of using their reason to abstract from their perceptual faculties, there is a sense in which, as Peter Burke has argued, often barely literate societal elites had joined in with common folk in various events and festivities. However, literate urban classes began to concoct a well-mannered society which differed drastically from that of their inferiors, fashioning themselves by continuously recreating, and then decrying, a crude under-culture which “persisted” in maintaining the superstitious beliefs which the elites had long left behind. Although Luther was more sympathetic to vulgar traditions, most Reformers came to view practices such as the Carnival as a pagan frivolity and a superstitious waste of time and they condemned the vulgar for intermixing the sacred and the profane. The Counter-Reformation could be equally adamant in criticising the behaviour of ordinary people, yet Reformers were particularly insistent that the laity should be educated in the basics of Scripture and in the need to grasp the significance of the Word of God rather than be dazzled by aesthetically stunning representations of holy things.⁵

⁴ For a specific critique of Catholics as dissemblers, see Stephen A. Kent, “The ‘Papist’ Charges against the Interregnum Quakers,” *Journal of Religious History* 12 (1982–3), pp. 180–90.

⁵ N. Z. Davis, “Proverbial Wisdom and Popular Errors,” in idem, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 227–67;

The argument of this paper is prompted by the view that the crises of representation of the later sixteenth century put a premium on understanding the normal workings of nature as well as on correctly reading the "histrionic calculus." I want to argue that the way in which the new philosophy was pursued in seventeenth century England was in some measure a response to a number of earlier fears about ubiquitous sources of error, imposture and delusion. Well-corroborated knowledge of the intricacies of nature—whether it was a mechanical philosophy, or one that appealed to "active principles"—was a morally certain means of avoiding being deceived about the nature of miracles or the nature of monsters. This solution to the problem of deceit was coextensive with the growing authority of natural philosophers and astronomers, individuals who had a divine mandate to inform the rest of Mankind about the real bounds of the natural. In the seventeenth century, literate Protestants who despised the idiocies of the vulgar were increasingly compelled to appeal to nature as it was interpreted by this new community of natural philosophers.

I attempt to relate the attacks on the vulgar that were widespread in natural philosophy, and indeed in literate classes generally, to the discourses of anti-Catholicism in England after 1530. I am not unaware of the fact that I present a multiplicity of different shades of Protestant polemic and that by no means all Protestants were hostile to every element of Roman Catholicism. Moreover, in many cases the attack on popish customs and beliefs was a cover for disputes that were taking place within Protestantism itself, particularly directed by puritan Anglicans and dissenters at what they disliked about various facets of broad- and high-church Anglicanism. This paper should be read as an attempt to locate some significant cultural contexts for the crisis of certainty in England to which Protestants such as Francis Bacon and William Chillingworth responded in the early seventeenth century. I conclude by looking at the way in which persistent Protestant fears about Catholic duplicity and superficiality in religion and philosophy served to shape the ways in which natural philosophy was practised, presented, and validated in the late seventeenth century.⁶

Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 23–9, 208–13, 215–6, 218–29, 258, and 259–81. For the detection of vulgar "errors" and their relation to popish superstition, see E. Worsop, *A Discoverie of Sundry Errours* (London, 1582).

⁶ See for example A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches*

Recent attempts to relate religious issues to the appearance of a new kind of natural philosophy have encountered many difficulties and efforts to link "Puritanism" to the advent of modern science have invariably run aground. One reason for this result is probably that many of these approaches, following the lead of Max Weber, have tended to take at face value the contemporary Protestant critiques of the baneful effects of Catholicism on scientific endeavour. For example, in his seminal *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas remarks that "friars and chaplains were invariably involved in the political conspiracies of the fifteenth century which made any use of magical aids," and that "the conjurer's ritual, with its hallowings, fumigations and consecrations, was strongly reminiscent of the Roman Mass, as many commentators pointed out [and] the roles of priest and magician were by no means clearly distinguished in the popular mind." However, popery could not so easily be extirpated, and Thomas claims: "the new Protestant attitude to ecclesiastical magic did not win an immediate victory; and some of the traditions of the Catholic past lingered on." Moreover, the radical scepticism of the sixteenth century was insufficient to force the Scientific Revolution into being; "Scot and his imitators had, like Pomponazzi, only been able to fill the gap left after the religious or magical explanations of Natural phenomena by invoking spurious natural causes, based on sympathy, antipathy, and occult influences." However, in addition to numerous problems associated with the notion of "Puritan" and with the standard derogatory depictions of Catholicism, the account of the all-conquering new philosophy which has traditionally accompanied such narratives is seriously distorted. Charles Webster has shown that there is "a magnitude of evidence indicative of the tenacity of interests running contrary to the mechanical philosophy" and urges the rejection of such outmoded explanatory categories while others, such as John Henry, have shown that the

in *English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), esp. Chap. 4. The general history of the response to the sceptical crisis and its relation to 17th-century English natural philosophy is explored in B. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); H. G. Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty in English Thought, 1630–1690*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); and S. Shapin and S. Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

notion that the mechanical philosophy was self-evidently progressive, and left all other discourses in its wake, is extremely problematic.⁷

Rather than attempt to extract some essence of Protestantism which functioned as a definitive causal factor in the emergence of early modern "science," I would suggest that it is more beneficial to examine Protestant *representations* of supposed Catholic abuses and to attempt to relate these to the premium that was placed by Protestants on understanding nature.⁸ Many of these critiques of Catholicism remained stable over the seventeenth century. For example, Protestants argued that Aristotle's tyrannical and fraudulent hold over modern philosophy was equivalent to Antichrist's or the Pope's despotic sway over the Catholic laity, while they also condemned the relevance of the cellular spaces in which Monks produced their inadequate work. So Bacon argued in a letter to Lord Burghley of 1591 in which he declared his wish to free knowledge from "blind experiments and auricular traditions and impostures," while in *The Refutation of Philosophies* he wrote: "Does the fact that Aristotle drew to himself both earlier and later ages prove him truly great? Oh, great without a doubt; but no greater than the greatest of impostors. For this is the prerogative of imposture, and in especial of the Prince of imposture, the Anti-Christ." In *The Advancement of Learning* he remarked on the "degenerate learning" of the schoolmen "who having sharp and

⁷ K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 274, 267–8, 70, and 646. See M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 35, 104–5, and 117; R. Merton, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: H. Fertig, 1970), pp. xvii, 58, 81, and 136; C. Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform* (London: Duckworth, 1975); C. Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 3 and 12; and J. Henry, "Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy: Active Principles in Pre-Newtonian Matter Theory," *History of Science* 24 (1986), pp. 335–81; J. Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 83 and 112; W. B. Ashworth, Jr., "Catholicism and Early Modern Science," in D. Lindberg and R. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature. Historical Essays on the Encounter between Religion and Science* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 136–66, and 147.

⁸ See P. Lake, "Anti-popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," in R. Cust and A. Hughes, eds., *Conflicts in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642* (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 72–106; J. P. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London: 1973); S. Shapin, "'The Mind is its own Place': Science and Solitude in Seventeenth Century England," *Science in Context* 4 (1991), pp. 191–218 and C. Butler, *Western Mysticism. The Teaching of Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life* (London: Constable, 1967).

strong wits, and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading, but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges," spun out "those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books."⁹

Section 2. Lying Eyes

Despite the general tendency of all Mankind to place too much trust in the senses, Protestants argued that the godly should place reliance upon their own senses in tandem with the exercise of faith, reason, and hard work. Confusingly, however, it was also urged that the senses were *not* to be trusted in a wide range of situations. This was an old issue in Christianity and general epistemology. In the *City of God*, for example, Augustine attacked the sceptic Varro whose claim that everything was uncertain "the City of God roundly condemns as madness": "It also trusts the evidence of the senses in every matter; for the mind employs the senses through the agency of the body, and anyone who supposes that they can never be trusted is woefully mistaken."¹⁰ For Protestants, the common people might be coached out of being swayed by the tricks of witches and popish priests but their perceptual faculties inevitably and irrevocably deluded them to the reality of nature. This had serious consequences for religious views and, since the appearance of extraordinary and "miraculous" events to ordinary people played a seminal role in the Bible in attesting to the truth of the Christian religion, major changes in cosmology after the mid-sixteenth century required concomitant changes in Scriptural hermeneutics. It became commonplace to argue that apparently false statements about the natural world in the Bible were in fact statements that the Divinely inspired spokesmen had "accommodated" their discourse to the capacities of the vulgar. In the

⁹ P. Rossi, *Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 23; B. Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1970), p. 113; Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning and New Atlantis*, ed. A. Johnston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 27–30.

¹⁰ See Augustine, *City of God*, trans. H. Bettenson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), Bk. 18, Chap. 19, p. 879. See also P. Kocher, *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1953) and Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, pp. 51–2.

seventeenth century this kind of argument was as necessary for the Catholic Galileo as it was for the Protestants Kepler and Newton and, as heliocentric views of the heavens became more authoritative after 1600, it was common to argue that geocentric Biblical passages were not false but had been "accommodated" to the inferior sensory apparatuses of the vulgar.¹¹

It had long been held that the learned natural philosopher and astronomer could divine the correct nature of the heavens and not be awed by what was in reality only part of the ordinary course of nature. As Aquinas pointed out in the *Summa Theologica*: "The word miracle is derived from admiration, which arises when an effect is manifest, whereas its cause is hidden. . . . Now the cause of a manifest effect may be known to one, but unknown to others . . . as an eclipse is to a rustic, but not to an astronomer." Likewise Sir Thomas Browne claimed in 1646: "the greater part of mankind having but one eye of sense and reason, conceive the earth farre bigger than the Sun, the fixed Stars lesser than the Moone, their figures plaine, and their spaces from earth equidistant." Such people "live and die in their absurdities; passing their dayes in perverted apprehensions [but] To behold a Rain-bow in the night, is no prodigie unto a Philosopher." Bereft of this more noble grasp of reality, the excessive dependency upon the senses had caused the religion of ordinary people to become perverted. Invisible things, Browne went on, "to humour the grossnesse of their comprehensions, have been degraded from their proper forms, and God himself dishonoured into manuell expressions . . . they will alwayes betake themselves, unto sensible representations, and can hardly be restrained the dulness of Idolatry." Citing Charron's attack on the vulgar in *Of Wisdome*, he remarked that they were the "most deceptible part of mankind" and accordingly were "daily mocked into error by subtler devisors, and have been expresly deluded, by all professions and ages." The vulgar lived in a world of mere (non)sense, liable to be tricked by priests,

¹¹ See Kepler, *Astronomia Nova* (Prague, 1609), trans. in T. Salusbury, ed., *Mathematical Collections and Translations* (London, 1661), p. 467, and R. S. Westman, "Kepler's Theory of Hypotheses and the 'Realist Dilemma,'" in *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 3 (1973), pp. 233-64, esp. 241. For accommodation theory, see in particular K. Scholder, *Ursprunge und Probleme der Bibelkritik im 17. Jahrhundert*, (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1966), 56-78, and A. Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 213-71.

jugglers, and even by the very senses which were their sole source of information about their world, and which therefore represented nothing.¹²

Protestant critiques, both of juggling tricks and of transubstantiation, raised the issue of sense-deception in an especially clear way. One *should* trust one's senses in cases like the Mass where neither the wafer nor the wine was really turned into the body and the blood of Christ—but one should *not* believe one's senses in other cases, such as the harmless tricks of conjurors and the more sinister Roman priests who pretended that gaudy statues shed tears. Yet in the case of transubstantiation, as John Locke argued, Catholics held obstinately to their absurd opinions:

soe that men will rather disbelieve their owne eyes renounce the evidence of their senses & give their owne experience the lie rather than admit anything disagreeing with these sacred oracles. Take an intelligent Romanist that from the very first dawning of any notions in his understanding hath had this principle constantly inculcated viz. That he must believe as the church believes or that the Pope is infallible, & this he never so much as heard questiond till at 40 or 50 years old he met with an heretick, how he is prepar'd easily to swallow not only against all probability but even the clear evidence of his senses the doctrine of transubstantiation, & will believe that to be flesh which he sees to be bread.¹³

The vulgar were also likely to be deceived in the issue of miracles; in the sixteenth century, commentators tended to observe a distinction between the miraculous, or that which carried the mark of God and which was truly supernatural, and the merely marvellous, which could be construed as being wonderful either because it was a rare if natural occurrence, or because it excited the wonder of spectators. Since both these categories entailed some notion of wonder on behalf of the onlooker, it became increasingly necessary to argue that neither demonic activity nor monsters (which came to be seen

¹² *Pseudodoxia epidemica: Sir Thomas Browne's Pseudodoxia epidemica*, ed. R. Robbins, 2 vols. (orig. London 1646; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 15, 67, 16 and 19.

¹³ John Locke, *Drafts for the Essay Concerning Human Understanding and other Philosophical Writings*, ed., P. Nidditch and G. A. J. Rogers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 71 (from Draft "A" of the "Essay", probably composed in the summer of 1671), and cf. 122–3 (from Draft "B"); Van Leeuwen, *The Problem of Certainty*, pp. 32–48, and Shapiro, *Probability*, pp. 30–1 and 102–3. For late 16th-century Protestant views of the Mass, see D. D. Waters, *Duessa as Theological Satire* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1970), pp. 1–20 and C. Dugmore, *The Mass and the English Reformers* (London: Macmillan, 1958).

as "sports of nature" produced by an active and female Nature) actually involved the supernatural suspension of the ordinary workings of nature. Despite the secularizing tendencies affecting the discussion of prodigies and monsters (who were now shown at fairs in large numbers), many continued to believe that they possessed some divine significance and Catholics and Protestants depicted each other's leaders as monsters prophesied in the Bible. Nevertheless, as Stuart Clark has pointed out, the general agreement of demonologists such as William Perkins and James I was that the devil operated by natural means, a position which implied that he was more cunning and subtle than any natural philosopher. In the case of miracles, Catholics were compelled to insist on increasingly watertight attestations to their existence in the modern world, while Protestants put all such activity down to an admixture of superstitious credulity and the evil machinations of the Roman Church.¹⁴

Surrounding all discussions of these matters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the questions of imposture and ignorance and the related issues of testimony and evidence. Fraud concerned the realm of the demonic—just as much as it did the human—and demonologists used a whole series of strategies to naturalise the power of the devil, the most significant of which were to show that the devil was a master of illusion just as he was *the* consummate natural philosopher. Even when he lacked powers over the natural world, he could command the perceptual faculties of the weak and ignorant,

¹⁴ For recent discussions of these issues see in particular J. Céard, *La Nature et les Prodiges* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1977); R. M. Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles from Joseph Glanvill to David Hume* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1981); S. Clark, "The Scientific Status of Demonology," in B. Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 351–68; P. Findlen, "Jokes of Nature and Jokes of Knowledge: The Playfulness of Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Europe," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990), pp. 292–333, esp. 306; S. Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 13, 19, 72–3, 77, and 110, and L. Daston, "Marvellous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," in J. Chandler, A. Davidson, and H. Harootunian, eds., *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice and Persuasion Across the Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 243–74 and 282–9. For monsters see Daston and K. Park, "Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in France and England," *Past and Present* 92 (1981), pp. 20–54, esp. 26–8 and 40–3; J. Céard, "The Crisis of the Science of Monsters," in P. Desan, ed., *Humanism in Crisis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), pp. 181–205, and A. Davidson, "The Horror of Monsters," in J. J. Sheehan and M. Sosna, eds., *The Boundaries of Humanity: Humans, Animals, Machines* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 36–67.

having an excellent understanding of the nature of their bodies. Demonologists set out to expose the *glaucomata*, or lying wonders mentioned in the New Testament, and Perkins noted that demonic effects only *appeared* supernatural to those “especially such as are ignorant of Satan’s habilitie, and the hidden causes in nature, whereby things are brought to passe.” Such a point went hand in hand with the remark that whereas there were natural phenomena which to humans were unimaginable or simply unknowable, to Satan they were most familiar, “because in themselves they be no wonders, but only mysteries and secrets.”¹⁵

If The Great Deceiver was also the world’s most accomplished natural philosopher, mere humans often went some way towards mimicking and controlling some of the extraordinary effects of nature which baffled the philosophically illiterate. In Catholic Europe, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the quality and impact of *kunstkammern*, or cabinets of curiosity, and a number of Jesuits such as Athanasius Kircher and Gaspar Schott perfected aspects of the older natural magic tradition in order to produce artificial illusions of great sophistication. Natural philosophers could reproduce the wonders of nature inside a special locale for such pursuits and they concealed the workings of the artefacts in imitation of the inaccessibility to humans of the real causes underlying the natural productions of the Creator. This could have its problems and, having been accused of dabbling in diabolism, Kircher was at one time forced to reveal the artifice underlying his performance. Schott also pointed out at the beginning of his *Magia Universalis* of 1657: “here the theatre where art and nature play is exposed to curiosity: but while they play for the learned, they deceive the ignorant,” showing how the division between the elite and the vulgar lay at the heart of natural philosophy within such (Catholic) communities. The vulgar could be delighted by benign clerics, while the educated might know that certain effects were comprehensible and natural. Yet to English Protestants, such jocular and ostensibly harmless trickery smacked of foolishness and even duplicity. Kircher and Schott were only two of

¹⁵ See Burns, *Great Debate*, pp. 75–6 and 116–8; Clark, “Scientific Status,” pp. 359 and 362. For Perkins see *idem*, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, 1610), p. 20. For a later acknowledgement of the devil’s skill in natural philosophy see Robert Boyle, “The Usefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy,” in T. Birch, ed., *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, 6 vols. (London, 1772), 2:58.

many natural philosophers who (like the Catholic founder of the Royal Society, Kenelm Digby) had the reputation in England of being credulous and superficial charlatans. Amidst this cultural onslaught on the vulgar, the underclass often fought back and ironically, even as elites boasted of deceiving the vulgar, they warned themselves about the deceptions commonly practised upon them by cunning natives, by people who flogged fakes to gullible collectors for their cabinets, and by poor people who, as Paré pointed out, mutilated their children to make them appear as monsters.¹⁶

The most pressing type of deception for Protestants concerned the issue of miracles because these were potentially of greatest significance and cultural power. Protestants invariably attributed candidate-miracles (and increasingly candidate-marvels) to ignorance of nature or to fraud; for example, Henry Stubbe, responding in Restoration England to claims that the "Irish stroker" Valentine Greatrakes was healing by miraculous means, pointed out that "We are all Indians and Salvages in what we have not accustomed our senses; what was conjuring in the last Age, is Mathematiques in this." Nevertheless, writers were careful to point out that the litany of false miracles perpetrated by heathens and by Catholics did not *per se* counter the supernatural reality of Scriptural phenomena. Joseph Glanvill noted that the prevalence of deceit in these areas meant that the good Protestant should exert far greater labour in sifting the evidence for and against the candidate event than had Catholics hitherto:

The frequent impostures that are met with in this kind, beget in some a belief, that all such relations are forgeries and tales; and if we urge the evidence of a story for the belief of witches or apparitions, they will produce two as seemingly strong and plausible, which shall conclude in mistake or design; inferring thence, that all others are of the same quality or credit [but] a single relation or an affirmative, sufficiently confirmed and attested, is worth a thousand tales of forgery and imposture, from whence an universal negative cannot be concluded.¹⁷

¹⁶ See the fine study by T. L. Hankins and R. J. Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 14–69, esp. 30–4 and 43–8 (for Kircher); Findlen, "Jokes," pp. 301, 306, 314–24, 328 and 319 (for the citation from Schott); Daston and Park, "Unnatural Conceptions," p. 41 (for Paré's account of duplicitous families of beggars) and pp. 44–6; Daston, "Marvellous Facts," pp. 256–7, 258, 262–4, 267–9, 274, and 287.

¹⁷ Stubbe, *The Miraculous Conformist* (London, 1666), p. 20; J. Glanvill, *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, 2nd ed. (London, 1689; repr. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), pp. 86–7.

What was required to acknowledge that a given event was miraculous was proper testimony, evidence that the miracle was consonant with Christian doctrine, and proof that it could not have been caused by natural means. Above all, authors increasingly referred to advances in contemporary natural philosophy to address the question of when it was reasonable to believe in the supernatural reality of a phenomenon which was beyond one's normal ken or to trust similar testimony from someone else.¹⁸

Section 3. Juggling

"Juggling" was the most pervasive word to describe every kind of deception. In his *Novum Organon*, Francis Bacon suggested that amongst Instances of the Ingenuity of the hand of Man "we must not look down on juggling and conjuring tricks, for some of them, although made for light-hearted and humourous purposes, can nonetheless give us valuable information," and he also proposed that such feats be commemorated in *New Atlantis*. In the 1520s Cornelius Agrippa had noted that "By delusions or juglinges . . . Magitiens doo shewe vaine visions, and with Juglinge castes doo plaie many miracles, & cause dreams, which thinge is not so much done by Geotically inchauntementes . . . as with a readie subtletie and nimblenesse of the handes, as wee dayly see stage players and Juglers doo." Since "every knowledge hath its beginning of the senses, which are often deceived. So all sciences which are derived and fast rooted in the senses are uncertain and deceitful." This was presumably an attack on the standard contemporary Aristotelian system which held that everything in the intellect had passed via the faculty of sense, although in fact this system was purportedly based on experience which was evident and universal, that is, known by everyone. Nevertheless, it was partly in response to these sceptical critiques that the Aristotelian approach, as well as the later Baconian and Boylean methodologies, emphasised the role of communal forms of philosophy which turned individual experiences into more general, universal truths.¹⁹

¹⁸ Glanvill, *Sadducismus*, pp. 124–5, and W. Warburton, *A Critical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Causes of Prodiges and Miracles as Related by Historians* (London, 1727) for the notion that miracles tended to abound in the "more credulous" countries.

¹⁹ Bacon, *Novum Organum: With other Parts of the Great Instauration*, trans. and ed. by P. Urbach and J. Gibson (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1994), pp. 201

Doctors who arrogated legitimacy to their own practices lambasted deviant practitioners as “quacks” and “jugglers”²⁰ while in the late sixteenth century “juggling” and “conjuring” became key terms to describe the panoply of deception and were almost equally popular words for Protestants to describe popish practices.²¹ From the 1580s onwards, many Protestants increasingly denounced exorcisms, whether by other Protestants or by Catholics, as juggling tricks; Catholic priests were simply mediocre tricksters and the Catholic audience relation during Mass resembled nothing so much as the carnival or theatre, in which all were implicated as actors. Christianity had long been distrustful of the effects of plays but, from the late 1570s, a number of Protestants revived the strong denunciations found in patristic literature and began to assail the cross-dressing and deceptive practices of the stage, all elements of which they condemned as idolatrous, popish and unchristian.²²

Aspects of traditional plays, such as the religious pageants of the North and the York Play Cycle, were either replaced or cleansed of their “popish” elements while, at the same time, the issue of Catholic imposture was linked to mainly Arminian attacks on what were seen as fraudulent Puritan exorcisms (which took place by means of fasting and prayer). The Catholic exorcism was seen as the more theatrical, however, and in his deconstruction of Catholic reports of exorcisms in 1603, Samuel Harsnet (the licenser of plays for the

and 322 (and cf. pp. 22, 60, 78, and 97 for the deceptions of unaided sense). Cornelius Agrippa, *Of the Vanitie and Uncertaintie of Artes and Sciences* (1527, trans. J. Sanford, 1569), pp. 62–3, Chap. 7, fol. 21, and P. Zambelli, “Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976), pp. 69–103. For the Aristotelian system see P. Dear, *Discipline & Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), esp. pp. 22–3, 42–5, 134–5, and 141–3; for Boyle, see S. Schaffer and S. Shapin, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*.

²⁰ For quacks as jugglers see T. Brian, *The pisse-prophet, or Certain pisse-pot lectures: wherein are newly discovered the old fallacies, deceit, and juggling of the pis-pot science used by all those (whether quacks, and empiricks, or other methodical physicians) who pretend knowledge of diseases by the urine in giving judgement of the same* (London, 1655). For quacks in general, see R. Porter, *Health for Sale: Quackery in England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) and W. Bynum and R. Porter, eds., *Medical Fringe and Medical Orthodoxy, 1750–1850* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

²¹ For a concerted attack on the juggling tricks of Roman priests, see in particular J. Gee, *The Foot out of the Snare* (London, 1624), pp. 41–72.

²² See Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, esp. pp. 156–77; W. Ringler, “The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage, 1558–79,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 5 (1941–2), pp. 391–418; William Rankins, *The Mirrour of Monsters: wherein is Described the Vices caused by the Sight of Playes* (London, 1587).

Bishop of London, Richard Bancroft) likened the performances of the players in such popish charades to the old religious plays "when the nimble Vice would skip up nimbly like Iacke an Apes into the devils necke, and ride the devil a course, and belabour him with his wooden dagger, til he made him roare, whereat the people would laugh to see the devil so vice-haunted." At the same time, Anglicans increasingly denied that there was any supernatural quality to specific instances of witchcraft and asserted that these were merely *performances* of weak and deluded women.²³

Duping popish priests were no better than actors and the Mass was merely a "carnival," "fashion," or "pageant." For Thomas Brecon, priests approached the altar like "game players," appearing on stage in "gay, gaudy, gallant, gorgeous game-players' garments," and Anthony Gilby alliterated further by describing the papists' "garish geare."²⁴ Preaching in the Catholic Church, as Protestant tourists never failed to mention, was pure spectacle designed to subjugate the vulgar. Never at any time was there the least intention in instructing them in godliness. Foxe claimed that Catholicism heralded a "new sort of players to furnish the stage, as school-doctors, canonists and four orders of friars," while Rainolds censured the:

profane and wicked toyes of *Passion-playes*, . . . procured by *Popish Priests* [who], as they have transformed the celebrating of the Sacrament of the *Lords supper* into a *Masse-game*, and all other partes of the *Ecclesiasticall Service* into *theatricall sights*; so in steede of *preaching the word*, they caused it to be played; a thing put in practise by their flowres, the *Jesuits*, among the poore *Indians*.²⁵

²³ See P. Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestantism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1991), pp. 100–2; J. Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, A. F. Johnston, "The plays of the Religious Guilds of York: The Creed Play and the Pater Noster Play," *Speculum* 50 (1975), pp. 55–90; Agnew, *Worlds apart*, pp. 114–5 (for the Vice figure) and S. Harsnet, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures, to withdrawe the harts of her Maiesties subiects from their allegiance, and from the truth of Christian Religion professed in England, under the pretence of casting out devils* (London, 1603), pp. 114–5, now reproduced (with a substantial new introduction) in F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett and the Devils of Denham* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993). For false exorcisms see Harsnet, *A Discoverie of the Fraudulant Practices of John Darrel* (London, 1599); Darrell, *A Detection of that Sinful Shamful Lying and Ridiculous Discours of Samuel Harshnet* (London, 1600); and R. Baddely, *The Boy of Bilson, or, the True Discovery of the late Notorious Impostures of Certain Romish Priests in their Pretended Exorcisme. . . .* (London, 1622).

²⁴ Brecon, "The Displaying of the Popish Mass," in J. Ayre, ed., *Prayers and other Pieces* (Cambridge, 1844), pp. 259–60; Gilby, *A Pleasant dialogue, betweene a Souldior of Barwicke . . . and an English chaplaine* (London, 1581), sig. E5v.

²⁵ Rainolds, *Th'Overthrow of Stage Playes* (Middelburg, 1599), Sig. X₃.

In the same vein, Jewel attacked the Popes who carried the sacramental bread around with them on horses and brought Christ's sacraments "to be used now as a stage play and a solemn sight; to the end that men's eyes should be fed with nothing else but with mad gazings and foolish gauds." Instead, the sacraments should "be ministered not like a masquery or a stage play but religiously and reverently." In 1624, John Gee argued that "The Jesuits being or having Actors of such dexterity, I see no reason but that they should set up a company for themselves, which surely will put down the Fortune, Red-Bull, Cock-pit, and Globe."²⁶

In addition to their reputation for reducing the Mass to a spectacle or carnival, Catholic priests were legendary for their cunning trickery and, from the late 1530s onward, there was something bordering on an obsession with tricks and their representation on stage. The links between trickery and popery were established in 1584 in Reginald Scot's remarkable *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. This offered readers a modern-looking deconstruction of the false power of witches although Scot's targets were much more broadly defined. Its title told that it was a revelation of:

the lewde dealing of witches and witchmongers is notably detected, the knaverie of conjurors, the impietie of inchanters . . . the infidelitie of atheists, the pestilent practises of Pythonists, the curiositie of figure-casters, the vanitie of dreamers, the beggarlie art of Alcumystrie, the abhominacion of idolatrie, the horrible art of poisoning, the vertue and power of naturall magike, and all the conveiances of Lagerdemaine and iuggling are deciphered.

Scot also attacked popery and the trickery associated with Catholic priests, issues interwoven with the critique of witchcraft and its function as a textbook depiction of common legerdemain. He equated the Pope with Antichrist and argued that "such things (saith *Cardane*) as seeme miraculous, are chiefly doone by deceit, legerdemaine, or confederacie or else they maie be doone, and yet seeme impossible, or else thing are said to be done, and never were nor can be doone." He condemned the "massemongers" who "sacrifice Christ

²⁶ Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, pp. 156–65; Jewel, *Apologie of the Church of England*, ed. J. E. Booty (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 35–6 (cited in Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*, p. 165); K. Gross, *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm and Magic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 146; J. Gee, *New Shreds of the Old Snare* (London, 1624), p. 17. See also Greenblatt, "Loudun and London," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1986), pp. 326–46.

himself," and tear the Lord's "humane substance, breaking it into small gobbets with their carnall hands," while he lashed the nonsense of popish incantations, arguing that of all the tricks he knew, those "cousening tricks of oracling priests and monkes, are and have beene speciallie most abhominable." Scripture revealed that "knaveries and cousening devises of preests" along with their "strange illusions" would be "shewed by them, even till the end," and he argued that whoever "knoweth and noteth the order and devises of and in popish pilgrimages, shall see both the oracles and their conclusions remaining, and as it were transferred from *Delphos* to *Rome*."²⁷

A lengthy acquaintance with a French juggler in London and those who plied their harmless trade near where Scot lived, told him that these performers "approch much neerer to resemble *Pharaos* magicians, than either withches or conjurors, & can make a more livelie shew of working miracles than anie inchanters can doo." The "inchanters" were none other than the Catholic priests: "In all ages monks and preests have abused and bewitched the world with counterfet visions", but:

if we shall yeeld that to be divine, supernaturall and miraculous, which we cannot comprehend; a witch, a papist, a conjuror, a cousenor, and a juggler may make us beleve they are gods, [so] whensoever we heare papist, witch, conjuror, or cousenor, take upon him more than lieth in humane power to performe, we may know & boldlie saie it is a knacke of knaverie; and no miracle at all. . . . Howbeit, such things as God hath laid up secretlie in nature are to be weighed with great admiration, and to be searched out with such industrie, as may become a christian man.

This "natural magicke" was nothing else than the "worke of nature . . . the sympathie and antipathie of naturall and elementarie bodies." Reliance upon a sound understanding of nature would vitiate the harmful effects of deception, though natural magic was not yet perfected:

But as manie necessarie and sober things are herein taught; so dooth it partlie (I saie) consist in such experiments and conclusions as are but toies, but nevertheless lie hid in nature, and being unknowne, doo seem miraculous, speciallie when they are intermedled and corrupted with cunning illusion, or legerdemaine, from whence is derived the

²⁷ Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft . . . etc.* (London, 1584; repr. New York: Dover, 1972), pp. 74, 90, 135, 109, 124, 93–4, and 97. See also Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 61–2.

estimation of witchcraft . . . therefore a man shall take great paines herein, and bestow great cost to learn that which is of no value, and a meere juggling knacke.²⁸

Section 4. Marvellous Machines and Cunning Monks

Although many fought against attempts to delude certain kinds of audiences, others demanded to be cozened. Travelling peepshows relying on mechanical ingenuity became common across Europe in the late fifteenth century, although the representation of mechanical devices as being somehow wonderful or even miraculous was as old as written records. Ironically, although the term “mechanic” had a derogatory meaning in the period, those who *displayed* machines in special settings such as at court, or in front of bewildered natives, were held to possess a special power. Mechanical skill was seen as a central difference between learned Europeans and others—especially non-Europeans—whose ignorance of the underlying principles of such artifacts caused them to experience the machines as marvels and their users as gods. Mechanical artifice was also linked to magical skill and the cults of Roger Bacon as magician and of Virgil as necromancer became especially popular from the fifteenth century. The notion that such machines might bring wonderful benefits, promulgated in the many books of “theatres of machines” which proliferated from the early sixteenth century, was countered by the view that their power might be abused. Hence the fact that, as Eamon points out, the 9th-century monk, Martin of Laon, derived *mechanicus* from *moechus*, or adulterer, on the grounds that the inventions of the *mechanicus*, like the magician, were based on deceit; “something clever and most delicate and which, in its making or operation is so invisible that it almost steals the vision of beholders when its ingenuity is not easily penetrated.” Popes and friars were also linked in early modern Europe to mechanical cunning, a discourse which was a powerful resource for Protestants at the end of the sixteenth century. Molland has shown that Bacon’s reputation as a magician and sorcerer from the Middle Ages was premised on the report that he had built an artificially speaking head—but with the help of the devil. The same feat, with the same assistant, was claimed of

²⁸ Scot, *Discoverie*, pp. 181, 268, 176–7, 170, and 164–5.

the future Pope by William of Malmesbury in his life of Gerbert of Aurillac.²⁹

The sixteenth century re-presented friar Bacon in a way far removed from anything he actually wrote in the *Epistola de Secretis Operibus Artis et Naturae* in which he distinguished his own art from that of demonic powers, jugglers and wise women: "Whatever is beyond the operation of nature or of Art is not human or is a fiction and the doing of fraudulent persons." Bale, who before the backlash against plays himself had written *Three Laws of Nature, Moses and Christ*, (in which the character Idolatry, the child of Infidelity, was staged looking like an old witch, and combining popery with peasant magic), condemned Bacon in 1548 as "a juggler and necromantic mage," who produced marvels "not by the power of God but by the operation of evil spirits," though ten years later he had changed his mind, calling him a wise philosopher who "was possessed of incredible skill in mathematics and devoid of necromancy. . . ."³⁰ Robert Recorde remarked in his *The Pathway to Knowledge* of 1551 that when certain marvels be wrought, and the reason thereof not understande, then say the vulgare people, that those thynges are done by negromancy. [Hence] that fryar Bakon was accompted so greate a negromancier, which never used that arte (by any conjecture that I can fynde) but was in geometrie and other mathematical sciences so experte, that he coulde dooe by them suche thynges as were wonderfull in the syght of most people.³¹

Just over a century later, Walter Charleton remarked on the extraordinary virtuosity to be found in the "Invisible College" of new experimental philosophers and wrote of how it was "the usual recreation" of this body to "practise all Delusions of the sight." Were

²⁹ W. Eamon, "Technology as Magic in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *Janus* (1983), pp. 171–212, esp. 179–80; O. Mayr, *Authority, Liberty and Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 21–7; A. G. Molland, "Roger Bacon as Magician," *Traditio* 30, (1974), pp. 445–60. See also B. Olson, *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 90–4. For the reputation of Virgil see J. W. Spargo, *Virgil the Necromancer: Studies in Virgilian Legends* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934).

³⁰ Eamon, "Technology as Magic," pp. 184–5; C. Hill, *The Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), p. 257; N. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 64–5; Molland, "Roger Bacon as Magician."

³¹ Robert Recorde, *The Pathway to Knowledge* (London, 1551), sig. 3v.

Roger Bacon himself alive in the mid 1650s, he wrote, "he would with amazement confesse, that he was canonized a Conjuror, for effecting far lesse, than these men regularly elicit to their friends, in sport."³²

Some of those accused of mathematical trickery were ordinary Catholics but Roman priests were renowned as the most cunning mechanical defrauders. This is shown by the events that followed the destruction of relics which began in England in 1535 when Thomas Cromwell's commissioners set about removing objects such as the boots of Thomas à Becket and "other reliques in divers places which [the clergy] use for covetousness in deceaphing the people." The late 1530s heralded an onslaught against what were seen as the duplicities of popish clerics and mobs smashed down objects like the Rood of Boxley, the "bearded man of Kent," which was described by an iconoclast as "That Babylonian Bel . . . a wooden God of the Kentish folk, a hanging Christ who might have vied with Proteus himself." Inside it were reputedly found "certain engines and *old* wire, with *Old rotten* sticks in the back of the same, which caused the eyes to move and stir in the head . . . and also the nether lip in likewise to move as though it should speak." It was able, "most cunningly, to nod with his head, to scowl with his eyes, to wag his beard, to curve his body [and] to reject and receive the prayers of pilgrims." A contemporary wrote that "the trickery of the wicked knaves was so publicly exposed in the image of the crucifix, that everyone was indignant against the monks and impostors of that kind. . . ." In a ballad called "The Fantassie of Idolatrie," William Gray noted of the Boxley artefact that:

He was made to jogle,
His eyes would gogle
He would bend his browes and frowne;
With his head he would nod
Like a proper young god
His shaftes would go up and downe.

While many toys like this did exist, it became a crucial part of Protestant propaganda in which the monks were lampooned but their cunning emphasised to heighten their perversity. Eamon Duffy argues that stories of the monks' immoralities and the staged unmaskings of such deceit were initially managed by Cromwell. One story recalled

³² Charleton, *The Immortality of the Human Soul* (London, 1657), pp. 46-7.

that the Rood was taken back to London in February 1538 and thrown into a crowd attending a sermon of Bishop Hilsey at Paul's Cross; Bullinger was told in April that when it was exhibited there "it turned its head, rolled its eyes, foamed at the mouth, and shed tears." Yet another tale told of how the same toy had put on a memorable act for Henry VIII! "Toys" were high up on the list of codewords for popish deceit which were emblazoned in the minds of the godly, and "Puppetry" was linked to "popetry".³³

Section 5. Protestant Expertise

In the late seventeenth century, anti-Catholicism remained a potent resource of abuse in English natural philosophy whether it was Stubbe's argument that the Royal Society was a Jesuit plot to destroy the universities or Barlow's similar claim based on a reading of Campanella's *De Monarchia Hispanica* that "The New Philosophy (as they call it) was set on foot, and has been carried on, by the Arts of Rome and those whose oath and interest it is to maintain all her Superstitions . . . our Universities begin to be infected with it, little considering the cause or consequence of it, or how it tends evidently to the advantage of Rome, and the ruine of our Religion." Mutual accusations of popish behaviour and sorcery lay at the heart of the cantankerous disputes between John Webster and John Wilkins over the relevance of university learning in the early 1650s, in disputes over the apparently miraculous healing powers of Valentine Greatrakes (who believed that he had been given the gift of miraculous cures "to abate the pride of the papists") a decade later, and even in the exchanges between Meric Casaubon, John Webster, Joseph Glanvill, and Henry More in the 1660s and 1670s over the reality of witchcraft. Nevertheless, there was now an extraordinary confidence placed in the capacity of properly conducted and progressive natural philosophy—and not necessarily of the "mechanical" variety which some saw as being conducive to atheism—to provide morally certain knowl-

³³ R. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Belief in Medieval England* (London: Dent, 1977); pp. 208–10; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, Vol. 1, *Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 1:232 n. 32, 235–6, 401–3; and E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 403–4 and 409 (for Gray's ballad).

edge about the natural world. Authors such as Locke virtually ignored the sceptical critique of the senses which had been so troublesome a century earlier—the hyper-scepticism of Descartes was seen by many as the mark of a deranged intellect—and pointed pragmatically to the success of the new philosophy and its purveyors.³⁴

Only the Protestant natural philosopher was fit to tell the godly whether what they saw was what really existed in nature; he had to be serious and hard-working at his vocation, he had to be able to distinguish between natural and supernatural causes, and he had a responsibility to tell ordinary people the truth about the natural world. Robert Boyle argued that the properly religious virtuoso played an integral role in defending true Christianity because:

the knowledge he has of the various and sometimes very wonderful operations of some natural things . . . will qualify him to distinguish between things that are only strange and surprising, and those that are only miraculous; so that he will not mistake the effects of natural magic for those of divine power. And by this well-instructed wariness, he will be able to discover the subtil cheats and collusions of impostors; by which, not only multitudes of all religions, especially heathen, but even learned men of most religions, for want of an insight into real philosophy, have formerly been, or are at this day, deluded, and drawn into idolatous, superstitious, or otherwise erroneous tenents or practices.³⁵

Boyle's work epitomizes the result of the injunction to Protestants to seek the serious internal realities of things and to avoid their external appearances which appealed only to the vulgar. For example, having mentioned the experience of a young girl brought back to sight at the age of eighteen and "ravished at the surprising spectacle of so many and various objects," he cautioned that a philosopher "is not only delighted with those outward objects, that gratify his sense, but receives a much higher satisfaction, in admiring the knowledge of the author." In *The Christian Virtuoso*, Boyle remarked that:

³⁴ See M. Hunter, *Science and Society in Restoration England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 138, 152, 153–4 and 162; T. Barlow, "Another letter to J. B.," in *The Genuine Remains of that Learned Prelate Dr Thomas Barlow*, ed. P. Pett (London, 1693); A. G. Debus, ed., *Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century: The Webster-Ward debate* (London: Macdonald, 1970); E. Duffy, "Valentine Greatrakes, the Irish Stroker: Miracle, Science and Orthodoxy in Restoration England," *Studies in Church History* (1976), pp. 251–73; and T. Jobe, "The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill-Webster Debate," *Isis* 72 (1981), pp. 343–54.

³⁵ Birch, *Works*, 5:531–2.

I know the undiscerning multitude, whose judgement seems rather lodged in the eye than in the brain, when they hear men name greatness of mind, are apt to fancy something, that, like the coronation of a king, is attended with pomp and splendor, and a numerous train of gazers, and the loud acclamations of the people . . . but reason and religion, that look on human things with eyes untroubled by those pompous outsides, that dazzle the vulgar, can easily see a vast difference betwixt greatness of fortune and greatness of mind.

Unlike the libertine, the natural philosopher avoided these outward shows and tried to overcome every difficulty to get to reality, "how remote soever those truths may be from vulgar apprehensions."³⁶

English experimental natural philosophers had to find the right balance between placing stress on the use of the senses which, used properly, were the only means of delivering veridical information about the actual world and the overreliance upon these same senses. For various reasons, this emphasis on sense-experience attracted the opprobrium of the likes of Henry More, Thomas Hobbes, and Margaret Cavendish, while members of the Royal Society themselves worried about the effects of turning their demonstrations into shows. Boyle argued that "the works of God are not like the tricks of jugglers, or the pageants, that entertain princes, where concealment is requisite to wonder; but our knowledge of the works of God proportions our admiration of them" an epistemological injunction which also applied to the decorum with which one should present experiments. As Christopher Wren wrote concerning the way in which to put on a display for the impending arrival at the Royal Society of Charles II:

if you have any notable experiment, that may appear to open new light into the principles of philosophy, nothing would better besee the pretensions of the society: though such would possibly be too jejune for this purpose, in which there ought to be something of pomp. On the other side, to produce knacks only, and things to raise wonder, such as KIRCHER, SCHOTTUS, and even jugglers abound with, will scarce become the gravity of the occasion. It must therefore be something between both . . . that may surprise with some unexpected effect, and be commendable for the ingenuity of the contrivance.

³⁶ Boyle, "The Usefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy," "Greatness of Mind promoted by Christianity" and "The Christian Virtuoso" in Birch, *Works*, 2:6-7, 30; 5:551 and 523-4.

Charles never turned up. A crypto-Catholic who had been raised in courts abounding in the cultures of display criticized by Wren, the show promised in his own Society had insufficient lustre for him to make the effort. Ironically, however, new discoveries in electricity and new lecturing circuits in London and beyond meant that the transformation of English natural philosophy into an experimental theatre was just round the corner.³⁷

³⁷ Boyle, "Usefulness" in Birch, *Works*, 2:30; Wren to Lord Brouncker, 30 July 1663, in T. Birch, ed., *The History of the Royal Society* 4 vols. (London, 1756), 1:288; Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, pp. 31–2 and cf. esp. S. Schaffer, "Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 21 (1983), pp. 1–43, esp. 10–11 and 14.

YOSEF KAPLAN

Conferring with Dick Popkin

Jorge Luis Borges imagined paradise as a library. Indeed, the year that I spent among the books and manuscripts of the Ets Haim/Montezinos Library of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam, gave me the feeling that I had wound up in an enchanted paradise. It was in that paradise, in the early spring of 1974, that I first met the preeminent scholar of Isaac de la Peyrère and the Preadamite theory. At that time Richard Popkin spent several hours in the library while on his way to France. He was looking for two manuscripts of Isaac de Pinto, but the conversation that developed between us extended far beyond what he had planned, and it almost made him forget the purpose of his visit. In fact, it was a miracle that he didn't miss his flight to Paris. He returned to Amsterdam a short time afterward, and I became attached to him not just as an esteemed teacher, but also, and mainly, as a beloved and faithful friend, and for me every meeting with him has always been a unique personal and intellectual experience.

I met him again over the years in Jerusalem, Amsterdam, Paris, and Los Angeles, and also elsewhere, mainly at academic conferences, most of which he initiated and organized. I was always surprised to discover anew his special talent in encouraging young scholars, in listening to them, and in guiding them, with generosity and collegiality that are difficult to find in the academic world. Each of my meetings with him taught me of the need to search constantly for the hidden and paradoxical connections among phenomena and ideas in the intellectual and religious world. Among the experts who take part in the various conferences, he always stands out as someone capable of rising above the narrow areas of specialization that impoverish our academic life and of linking widely separated subjects, areas, and periods. Whether it be a conference on Spinoza, or on the history of the Jews of Holland, or on Menasseh Ben Israel, or on the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Richard Popkin always

arrives equipped with a new discovery, a manuscript or rare book, that he found in some library or obscure manuscript collection. The new discovery usually provides him with a clue for another investigation, in which he persists, indefatigably, for years. I admit without shame: I initially regarded some of his hypotheses with skepticism. But most of the time those hypotheses have proven to be convincing and correct. A meeting with Richard Popkin at a conference usually produces an idea for the subject of a new conference and raises hopes of meeting him as soon as possible at a new crossroads in the Republic of Letters, where he is a leading and stimulating force, and one of the most prominent and beloved citizens.

AN ALTERNATIVE PATH TO MODERNITY:
THE SEPHARDI JEWS OF AMSTERDAM
IN EARLY MODERN TIMES

Yosef Kaplan

Jacob Katz in his *Tradition and Crisis* viewed the mid-eighteenth century as the great turning point in Jewish society which led to a change in its traditional character:

A real break with tradition is implied only when it is re-evaluated and no longer serves as the basis for justifying the changes that take place, but becomes the point of departure for reservations and criticism. In this sense, it can be said that the Jewish society preserved its traditional character until the second half of the eighteenth century.¹

While Katz restricted himself in this book and dealt only "with the region populated by Ashkenazi Jewry in its broader sense,"² admitting that "in other countries . . . different factors and circumstances intervened,"³ in his *Out of the Ghetto* he expanded his geographical range and included the Jews of western Europe within the framework of his discussion, but without changing his basic pronouncement regarding the timing of the turning point in traditional Jewish society:

The hundred years from 1650 to 1750, preceding the period of change, reveal some shifts in the social position and the economic role of Jews. Some alterations in both Gentile and Jewish ideologists in defining their attitudes to one another became evident. But, on the whole, the structure of society as well as the systems of thought by which it was justified and supported, remained intact.⁴

When we come to discuss the entry into the modern age of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of western Europe, particularly those who lived in the flourishing center of Amsterdam in the seventeenth

¹ J. Katz, *Tradition and Crisis. Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: Free Press, 1961), p. 215.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴ J. Katz, *Out of the Ghetto. The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation (1770-1870)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 41.

century, a number of questions arise regarding the foregoing statements by Katz: Does the model of traditional society traced by Katz indeed fit the social, cultural, and mental reality of those *conversos* and their descendants who openly returned to Judaism during the seventeenth century, settled in "the lands of freedom" in western Europe, and established their own communities there? Is it possible to apply Katz's periodisation to the Sephardi community in Amsterdam and to claim that the new phenomena that appeared among them in the second half of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century were also only "in the nature of variations or deviations from the traditional pattern"?⁵ Is it also true of them that "the outside world did not overly occupy the Jewish mind; it was neither a field of social aspiration nor a source of acute spiritual danger"?⁶ Were the members of this community not influenced by the extensive changes wrought by the crisis of the seventeenth century in many areas of life in various parts of Europe? Many of the best historians of 17th-century Europe agree that during that century a crisis occurred in many societies on that continent which changed their physiognomy:⁷ Was western Sephardi Jewry, which, because of its dispersion, overlapped the areas of ferment and change in that age, indifferent to the changes taking place in the society within which it was active?

In the course of this essay, I shall examine these questions and relate them to others that derive from them.

* * *

The Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam have always presented a complex historiographical problem for scholars who have occasionally come to contradictory conclusions on this subject.

Graetz, for example, viewed them as a refreshing phenomenon in the landscape of 17th-century Jewry. As he presents them, the surrounding Christian society related to them with honor and respect:

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷ On the crisis of the seventeenth century and the controversy aroused by the thesis of a general crisis, see, among others, T. Aston, ed., *Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660* (New York: Basic Books, 1965); G. Parker and L. Smith, *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Theodore K. Rabb, *The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

"The old-established prejudices against them disappeared more and more upon closer acquaintance."⁸ Even from the political and juridical point of view, according to Graetz, their status was different from the other parts of the Jewish people:

The Stadholders of the Netherlands, princes of the house of Orange-Nassau . . . *treated them as citizens with full rights* [my emphasis]. And this was a matter of right, not a concession: As Amsterdam was not so wealthy as it afterwards became, it could not do without the Jews, who had transferred to it their riches and their knowledge of affairs. . . . The Jews of Portugal betrayed neither by their cultured language, their demeanor, nor their manners, that they belonged to a despised caste; on the contrary, their carriage was that of people of rank with whom it was an honor for many a Christian burgher to be acquainted.

In particular, Graetz brought out and emphasized the education and cultivation of the immigrant Marranos who settled in Amsterdam:

[They] belonged for the most part to the educated classes; . . . they had occupied positions as physicians, lawyers, government officials, officers or clergymen, and were familiar with Latin language and literature no less than with belles-lettres.

This special Jewish community had reached a safe haven in Holland, which was then considered to be:

the most civilised part of Europe. . . . Hence, in Holland cultivated Jews had intercourse with educated Christians on terms of equality. . . . At the time when Spinoza threw down the challenge to Judaism, a degree of culture and science prevailed in the Jewish-Portuguese circle, unknown either before or after."⁹

Here they established an exemplary educational institution, "perhaps, the first graded institution of the kind among the Jews."¹⁰ But, in Graetz's views, the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam not only broke through the stifling bonds of the medieval Jewish ghetto with their social status, their culture, and their education; they also brought with them the seeds of deviation and heresy, which aroused among them a religious and ideological ferment which shook the foundations of their Jewish existence:

⁸ All of these quotations from Graetz are taken from the English edition, *History of the Jews*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia, 1891-8), 4:674ff. When the quotations are taken from another volume this will be indicated.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:109.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4:681.

Many members, born and brought up in Catholicism, brought with them and retained their Catholic views and customs; they thought that they could combine them with Judaism. . . . From childhood the Marranos had heard and seen that one is allowed to sin, if from time to time he is reconciled with the Church. . . . Hence the Marranos led a life far from perfect, especially in point of chastity.

Graetz devoted a special chapter to Spinoza and to Sabbatai Sevi, noting the challenges to Judaism voiced in the mid-seventeenth century, almost simultaneously, both in the orient and in the west. However, when he discussed Spinoza's doctrine and the collision between him and his community, which ended with his excommunication, Graetz emphasized that in his own time Spinoza did not raise a stir within the Jewish world, in contrast to the deep shock which was provoked by the appearance of the Messiah of Smyrna.¹¹ In Graetz's opinion, these special Jews and their leaders suffered ill fortune, for their spiritual leaders "were possessed of only mediocre talents, in some degree lacked mental poise."

This limitation prevented them from being a great blessing to Judaism and, perhaps, from making a deep impression on its development. Moreover, this community, which was supposedly imbued with the best of European humanist culture, maintained an internal government of a "despotic character," fighting fanatically and cruelly against the dissidents who arose within their community:

They had brought from Spain mischievous zeal in maintaining the faith pure and uprooting heresy. The Amsterdam rabbis introduced the innovation of bringing religious opinions and convictions before their judgment-seat, of constituting themselves a sort of inquisitorial tribunal, and instituting autos-da-fe, which, even if bloodless, were not less painful to the sufferers.

These remarks of Graetz about the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century are not based on meticulous study of the sources. His description of the Sephardi community as an almost ideal Jewish society is built on stereotypical views which had been current among European intellectuals from the time of Bayle and Basnage to Voltaire. Mendelssohn and his contemporaries, it would seem, were charmed by descriptions of this kind, which were advanced by enlightened Jewish intellectuals who were pleased to find, as it were, in the Sephardi community of Amsterdam of the seventeenth century, a precedent for the very type of Jewish society to which

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5:86ff.

they themselves aspired: based on Jewish values and, at the same time, involved with European culture; a society with full civil rights, arousing respect and honor among the gentiles; an enlightened community with well established ties to cultured Christians on an equal footing; a Jewish community diligent in educating its sons and investing rational thought for that end, combining in its curriculum the values of the Jewish tradition with modern elements ("elocution and modern Hebrew poetry were also taught there which was not usual in other Jewish schools").

These words left a deep impression on Shaul Pinchas Rabinovitz who made the following comment on this matter in the Hebrew version of Graetz's work:

These are the outlines of the school which the refugees from the Inquisition established when they found refuge in Holland. Without doubt, if the Jews of Germany and Poland had done the same thing, all of European Jewry would have a different aspect, a bright countenance, and neither the doctrine of Judaism nor the Hebrew language would have been forgotten by the Jews, as we see today.¹²

It must be pointed out that in modern Jewish historiography the main features of Graetz's idealized description have been accepted, in full or in part. However, the emphasis given to certain points in the aforementioned description often varies from historian to historian, altering the final balance of the picture. Thus, for example, although Dubnow clung to Graetz's version, in the end he left the Sephardi community of Amsterdam in the darkness of the Middle Ages. Regarding their juridical and social status, Dubnow states:

Dutch Jews enjoyed full freedom of worship, as well as complete communal autonomy. Nonetheless, Jews still lacked equality of citizenship. Calvinism was the state religion, and all the other faiths were merely tolerated. . . . As was the case everywhere, the representatives of the Christian handicraftsmen and merchants strove to restrict the freedom of Jewish trade.¹³

Regarding their inner view of the world, Dubnow emphasized the repressive tendencies of the communal leadership at the expense of the individualistic and critical views expressed by some of its members.¹⁴

¹² See Z. Graetz, *Sefer divrei yemei Yisrael* in the Hebrew translation by Shaul Pinchas Rabinovitz (Warsaw, 1908), Vol. 8, p. 13 n. 1.

¹³ S. Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, translated from the Russian by M. Spiegel, 5 vols. (New York, 1967-73), 4:260.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:631.

For Dubnow, the “degree of culture and science [that] prevailed in the Jewish-Portuguese circle” was dwarfed in comparison with the “detriment of freedom of conscience” which indeed had already been pointed out by Graetz, though it was somehow overlooked in his overall description.

The first abbreviated edition of Salo W. Baron’s *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* contains a special chapter on “Italian and Dutch Haskalah.”¹⁵ The very fact that Baron was not reluctant to use the term “Haskalah” to describe 16th-century Italian Jewry and Sephardi Jewry in Holland in the seventeenth century shows that he saw in them clear signs of great changes in Jewish society in the modern period: “Formally, too, the Italian and Dutch developments laid the foundations for the Central and Eastern European Haskalah.”

When he came to describe the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of Holland in the seventeenth century, Baron went out of his way to point out the great change that then took place in that society. Baron speaks of a “new spirit” typifying the life of the Sephardi community of Amsterdam. The Jews tended to take an active role in “general science” and “some of the leading medical men of the age were Amsterdam Sephardim.” Secular studies occupied an important place in the curriculum of the well known Ets Hayim Yeshiva and, more importantly, “The Dutch Jewish school system, at least, anticipated many postulates of the later Haskalah.”

Although in Baron, the affairs of Uriel da Costa and Baruch Spinoza are treated as “singular phenomena,” according to him, anyone familiar with the religious and intellectual ferment of the Jews of Amsterdam at that time “will easily perceive that firm foundations were laid there for *the secularization of Judaism and the incorporation of the Jews into the general cultural and political life of the western nations*” [my emphasis].¹⁶

¹⁵ Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 2:205–12.

¹⁶ It should be noted that in the extended chapter in which he wrote about the Jews of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century (“Dutch Jerusalem”), in the second and enlarged edition of his work, Baron did not reiterate these remarks. Only in relation to the deism of da Costa did Baron write: “We shall see in another context that such efforts at blurring, rather than comprehending, religious differences, stimulated the existing trends toward religious syncretism or agnosticism, even outright atheism, and mightily contributed to the slowly swelling wave of secularism in the Enlightenment Era.” See Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, second edition, revised and enlarged (New York, Philadelphia, 1973), Vol. 15, p. 62.

In his *Galut*, published in German in 1936, Y. Baer came to conclusions close to those of Baron, though he formulated them slightly differently. In a special chapter on the subject, named "From the Ancient Faith to a New Historical Consciousness," he wrote:

In Sephardic circles of this period we find for the first time an optimistic consciousness of progress. They feel themselves to have had a hand in the libertarian development of Holland. From the Sephardim of England and Holland, rationalism spread to the Jewish sceptics in France and even to the Jews of Germany.¹⁷

Baer too saw a harbinger of the Haskalah in the Sephardi Jews of western Europe. He also found penetrating critics of the foundations of the religious tradition among them such as Uriel da Costa (who remarked that "from this sort of criticism it is only a step to the complete rejection of Judaism") and Baruch Spinoza ("the first Jew to separate himself from his religion and his people without a formal religious conversion").¹⁸

However Baer gave particular emphasis to the existence of:

sceptics and men of pleasure, or even men who, with no thought of undermining the tradition that had been handed down to them, gave up their political ties and their responsibility to the Jewish nation as a whole, and tried to make themselves as comfortable as possible in their "homes" in the Golah [Exile]. *Such types had always existed, but from the end of the seventeenth century on they became steadily more numerous until they finally stood in the foreground of Jewish life.* [my emphasis].¹⁹

Baer attributed particular significance to expressions of doubt and indifference regarding the sanctity of the Land of Israel on the part of apathetic and sceptical members of the community in Amsterdam who were sharply attacked by Rabbi Moses Hagiz in his *Sefat Emet* (Amsterdam, 1707). In the views of these sceptics, Baer saw "the starting point of the theories of two centuries."²⁰

Azriel Shohat, who gave an early date to the turning point among the Jews of Germany, placing it at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and who saw that period as the commencement of the

¹⁷ Y. F. Baer, *Galut*, trans. R. Warshow (New York, 1947), p. 114.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 100ff.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 113; Cf. his Hebrew article, "The Land of Israel and Exile in the Eyes of the Medieval Generations," *Measef Zion* 6 (1934), pp. 179-80; on Moses Hagiz see E. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy. Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

Haskalah movement, did not devote a separate discussion to the Sephardi Jews. Nevertheless, Shohat did not ignore the possible influence of the Spanish and Portuguese upon the Ashkenazi Jewish society of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries:

One must also regard close contact with the Portuguese Jews as a source of these changes. Not only did Portuguese Jews live alongside Ashkenazi Jews in Hamburg, and in Frankfurt, Hannau and Mannheim as well, but commercial contacts also brought Ashkenazi Jews to Amsterdam and London.²¹

In what way, according to Shohat, could the Sephardi Jews influence their Ashkenazi brethren?

The Portuguese—*conversos* and the descendants of *conversos*—did not all live a full Jewish life. The tradition of their fathers was weak among them, and they were far from a life of piety. They had never known the ghetto and Jewish segregation, and they were not averse to enjoying the life of this world, as best they could. The Portuguese Jews' way of life was likely to have influenced primarily the wealthy Ashkenazi Jews in Germany, and from them it spread to the rest of the people.

Elsewhere Shohat offers a reason why the clear manifestations of secularity and of the pursuit of pleasure appeared in Hamburg before the other communities in Germany. This was because "here the contact with the Portuguese Jews was closer, . . . and *perhaps this was all under the influence of Amsterdam*" [my emphasis].²² H. H. Ben Sasson related only very briefly to Sephardi Jews in the west at the end of his book on the history of the Jews of the Middle Ages, in a special passage entitled, "The Path to the Modern" (a literal translation of the original Hebrew title would be "Shakers of the Foundations"). Ben Sasson viewed the crisis undergone by the western Sephardi Jews as a precursor of the change in periods and the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times in Jewish history. In Spinoza's "embitterment," Ben Sasson saw a "first sign" of "future revolts" against the authority of the Halakha, against the past of the Jewish people during most of its history, and against the communal regime. But in his own generation, from the Jewish point of view, Spinoza remained an isolated thinker beyond the pale. Ben Sasson concludes his book with the following passage:

²¹ A. Shohat, *Changing Times. The Beginning of Haskalah in German Jewry* (Hebrew, Jerusalem, 1960), p. 11.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Many tendencies and currents in modern Jewish history were emerging at the close of the Middle Ages . . . also because of the criticisms expressed by various thinkers in Italy and the Netherlands.²³

Ben Sasson viewed thinkers who were isolated in their times as heralds of change, but the Jewish society in which they were active, communities of Iberian Jews in the Netherlands, especially Amsterdam, he described as:

a Jewish society that had learnt by bitter experience what contact with non-Jewish culture in Spain had done to their forefathers; it was now conducting its own affairs in a Calvinist environment and had accordingly introduced a system of stern supervision of the individual, his way of life and opinions.²⁴

S. Ettinger also related to the Sephardi Jews in western Europe at the beginning of his history of the Jews in the modern period (the sequel to Ben Sasson's work, edited by him and presented as part of a single historiographical enterprise). Rather than a "system of stern supervision of the individual," as described by Ben Sasson (which finally permitted him to retain this historical chapter within the medieval world), Ettinger claimed that:

despite its organizational rigidity, the Sephardi community was not particularly stable with regard to Jewish tradition. . . . There were those among them who found their regained Judaism so remote from what they had envisaged in their old homeland that they were bitterly disillusioned, and although they did not retire from Jewish life or leave the community, they became indifferent towards Jewish affairs. Others taught children Spanish customs and culture rather than Jewish traditions.²⁵

In contrast to Ben Sasson, who found isolated thinkers in this community who laid the groundwork for trends and currents in modern Jewish history, Ettinger argued that among the Sephardi Jews:

those with deep roots in the two cultures made various attempts at philosophical and even religious synthesis in those years. *This served as the basis for the spiritual ferment in these communities during the seventeenth century, which, in content, anticipated rationalist theories and ideals of the Enlightenment*

²³ H. H. Ben Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (London, 1977), Part V, "The Middle Ages," pp. 721ff.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 719.

²⁵ S. Ettinger, "The Modern Period," in Ben Sasson, *History of the Jewish People*, p. 778.

*and even left its stamp on the development of European thought in that period [my emphasis].*²⁶

An extremely interesting statement on the present subject appears in one of the most important historiographical studies on marranism in the seventeenth century written in the past generation. Yerushalmi, one of the most important scholars of the history of Sephardi Jewry in western Europe, took up and emphasized the formulations presented by Baron in the previous generation:

*The secular culture of many Dutch and Italian Jews anticipated the Berlin Haskalah of the eighteenth century and was, in some respects, more naturally acquired, mature, and broadly based. . . . Against the backdrop of an age which produced a number of significantly "modern" developments in Jewry, they [the Marrano emigrants] stand out as perhaps the first modern Jews. [my emphasis].*²⁷

Yerushalmi was the first Jewish historian explicitly to relate to the ideological ferment which characterized seventeenth century Europe, of which there were signs in Jewish society no less than among the Christians. He called attention to individual Jews and small groups of Jews "who had been deeply affected by the rationalistic and sceptical currents of the times."

Yerushalmi noted that not all the deviants from the high road of the Jewish establishment expressed their views openly and that even those who remained within the traditional and communal framework occasionally showed "a decidedly modern intellectual and cultural orientation."

Yerushalmi viewed two factors as the roots of the modern spiritual makeup of the *conversos* who had returned to Judaism: (1) they were the first group of European Jews whose spiritual world was molded outside the Jewish community and outside the world of the Jewish Halakhic traditions; (2) as nominal Christians in Spain and Portugal they had direct access to theological, philosophical, and scientific sources of the west, and this was in a period when most of the European universities were closed to the Jews.²⁸

²⁶ Ettinger, "The Modern Period."

²⁷ Y. H. Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto. Isaac Cardoso, a Study in Seventeenth Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 43ff.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

* * *

We shall not enter into a detailed analysis of the aforementioned historiographical views about the Sephardi Jews of western Europe, particularly in seventeenth century Amsterdam. Indeed there are essential differences among them: between those who speak of a political and juridical status of "full" or "almost full" rights for the Jews as opposed to those who limit the scope of the rights granted by the authorities; between those who speak of a "new spirit," a true enlightenment, the "first modern Jews," etc., and those who only see in them the first signs of processes which were to mature later; between those who place them in the modern period and those who still would relegate them to the Middle Ages. But, despite these differences, among most of them we find a clear tendency to make use of terms such as modernity, secularization, enlightenment, and the like, which are generally employed in discussions of 18th-century Jewish history, mainly in the later stages of that century.

Is the use of these concepts justified or, rather, are we dealing with an anachronistic application which blurs substantive differences between various historical phenomena and processes which belong to different orders?

Did the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam and the members of the western Sephardi diaspora really exhibit a tendency towards the overall rationalization of social life? Did the members of this community truly participate in a trend towards *Entzauberung*, i.e., disenchantment of the world?

Katz's restrained, strict approach stands out even more strongly in contrast to the opinions and concepts of the aforementioned historians. He was not tempted to view the Sephardi Jews of Holland and elsewhere in western Europe as a true turning point which led to a change in the traditional image of Jewish society.

Regarding their juridical and political status, Katz did admit that "as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jews in Holland felt themselves to be more free religiously and economically less hampered than in any other country in Europe."²⁹ Nevertheless Katz views this as nothing more than a conjunctural situation which resulted from Dutch economic expansion and the atmosphere of religious tolerance which followed the bloody religious wars "and not from a

²⁹ *Out of the Ghetto*, p. 11.

change of status. Basically the legal status of Dutch Jews, like that of their brethren elsewhere, remained unchanged."³⁰

In relation to their cultural and educational situation Katz also admitted that "Sephardim are known to have acquired education and knowledge in their respective countries—France, Holland, England—since the end of the seventeenth century. . . . The early cultural adaptation of Sephardim is a well-known fact."³¹ Nevertheless his remarks (in which he differs with the conclusions of A. Shohat regarding German Jewry) give the impression that he saw neither the education nor the cultural adaptation of the Sephardi Jews of the west as phenomena capable of bringing about a change in the makeup of the culture. Essentially, according to Katz, "the system remained uncontested. The real turning point would arrive only when deviation was justified on the basis of new concepts that contradicted the value system of tradition."³²

In describing the changes in consciousness and the ideological shifts which purportedly made their mark on a group of Sephardi Jews in Holland at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Katz refers to the work of Rabbi Moses Hagiz, according to which some of those Jews rejected their faith in the sanctity of the Land of Israel. These Jews, according to Katz, felt themselves secure in Holland. Hence they made fun of the idea of returning to the Land of Israel and rejected the financial obligation of supporting the Jewish community there.

But Katz does not view even these Jews as a true turning point:

These were sporadic rather than consistent and serious convictions as is borne out by the fact that they did not find written expression and were not disseminated at that time. Though without visible effect, these feelings were indicative of a trend that might have developed under different conditions.³³

Indeed Katz's conceptual precision is praiseworthy for on this point he insisted on distinguishing between phenomena which were indeed distinct and on pointing out the substantive and formal differences between traditional and modern societies. Katz taught us to see the gap between those who viewed themselves as deviants and sinners,

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 3ff.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

who are found in all traditional societies, and deviants who advocate a new system of values and who assume responsibility for their actions on the basis of their religious and ideological attitudes. The latter demand change and strive to alter the social system, and they are to be viewed as heralds of change.³⁴ Hence the historian must try with all his might to distinguish between deviance and variety within a traditional system and efforts to step out of the traditional system into a new one.

One must refrain from incautious use of concepts that apply to a later and well defined historical realm. The "Haskalah" of the late eighteenth century was an *ideological movement* which was intended to *change* Jewish society. Neither the "European" education of those who founded it nor their affinity for the values of European culture, philosophy, or science gave the Haskalah its unique character. Rather, it was the rationalist-universalist approach, which they received from the standard bearers of the Enlightenment, of the Haskalah, which led them to an operative conclusion regarding the need for a transformation of values within the Jewish world. The affinity with the sources of European culture was not in itself sufficient to bring about this change; the fact that the Marranos and their descendants on the Iberian peninsula and within the western Sephardi diaspora were exposed to the theological, philosophical, and scientific knowledge of the Christian society of Europe did not make them into advocates of the Haskalah or even its heralds. The knowledge and values to which they were exposed in Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were very distant from those of the *Aufklaerung*. The impression one gets from studying the thought of the members of the western Sephardi diaspora in the seventeenth century is rather that the values brought from the Iberian peninsula served *most of them* as a means of bolstering the authority and legitimacy of the Jewish tradition.³⁵

The special organization of the educational institution of the Sephardi community of Amsterdam and the curriculum of the Ets Hayim Yeshiva, rather than being similar to the ideals of the German Haskalah, actually resemble the Jesuit schools and seminaries that were active in Spain and Portugal during those generations. A good

³⁴ *Tradition and Crisis*, p. 215.

³⁵ Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism. The Story of Isaac Orobio de Castro*, trans. R. Loewe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 308–62.

number of Marranos had been educated in those schools, from which the leaders of the "Portuguese Jewish Nation" in Amsterdam derived inspiration when they came to consolidate the means for educating the children of the young community.³⁶

The fact that young people from this community received degrees from Dutch universities during the seventeenth century, especially that of Leyden, does not indicate a breakthrough which opened new possibilities for young Jews to study in non-Jewish institutions and make contacts with their Christian contemporaries under the same roof. We have clear information about at least eleven Jewish students, all of them Spanish or Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam, who were granted the degree of Doctor of Medicine by the Senate of the University of Leyden between 1655 and 1686. We find that a considerable portion of them spent no more than a few days at the university (three to six days): they would come to Leyden, register at the university, take the examinations, present the theses they had prepared previously, and receive the degree. This was common in Leyden and in other Dutch universities where the students were assisted by the flexibility in the structure of studies at the institution. Most of them came in pairs, lived together in the same room, registered on the same day, took examinations together, and defended their theses together. There are grounds for assuming that these students received their medical training with physicians within the Jewish community of Amsterdam (who are also mentioned in their theses) and, exceptionally, from Jewish lecturers at the Atheneum of Amsterdam, such as Gerard Blasius, who was close to members of the Sephardi community in Amsterdam. Medicine was the only field of study open to Jewish students. An explicit statement of the Senate of the University shows that on May 28, 1678 strong objection was made to the granting of the degree of Doctor of Theology to a Jew whose name is not mentioned.³⁷

This situation was not very different from that known to us in various places during the Middle Ages and one would do well to be

³⁶ On *conversos* who studied in Jesuit educational institutions, see Y. Kaplan, "Rabbi Saul Levi Mortera's Treatise, 'Arguments Against the Christian Religion'," in *Studies on the History of Dutch Jewry* 1 (Hebrew, Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 17, 21-3.

³⁷ Y. Kaplan, "Jewish Students at Leyden University in the 17th Century," *Studies on the History of the Dutch Jewry* 2 (Hebrew, Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 65-76; cf. Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh Ben Israel. Rabbi, Printer and Diplomat* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945), pp. 120-1.

prudent about coming to far-reaching conclusions. Moreover, perusal of a number of the dissertations presented by these Jewish students as well as of the medical literature written by Sephardi physicians in Holland during the seventeenth century shows that any inklings of scientific revolution in the field of medicine had passed over their heads.³⁸ Further, despite the relatively large number of Sephardi physicians in those generations, including prominent scientists (such as Amatus Lusitanus, Elijah Montalto, Abraham Zacuto, known as Zacutus Lusitanus, and many others), they took not part in the scientific revolution in the field of medicine.

This might derive from a certain paradox: in Spain and Portugal, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, medicine had become a "Jewish profession" because of the high percentage of "New Christians" among the physicians of the Iberian Peninsula.³⁹ Many of them occupied prominent positions in this field and also taught in the most important universities: hence they were too closely involved in the classical medical establishment to be open to new initiatives and conceptual changes, which are known to have arisen outside the walls of the universities.

It is most important, however, to point out the clear lines of similarity between the Sephardi society in Amsterdam and other centers of the Sephardi diaspora in western Europe and the traditional communities in the Ashkenazi world in central and eastern Europe. Study of the community records and regulations shows a great degree of similarity in the concepts and methods of organization and leadership; the communal institutions are also marvellously similar or identical to those of the Ashkenazi Jews in various centres. Above all, it must be emphasized that, in the Sephardi diaspora as in all other parts of the Jewish world, the maintenance of the Halakha was held as a primary ideal and they retained awareness of the unity of Jewish destiny. The Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam did not wish to view themselves as different from other parts of the Jewish world with regard to their Jewish worldview or their relation to the Halakha. Moreover, throughout the entire seventeenth century, according to evidence which has reached us from Ashkenazi visitors to Amsterdam

³⁸ See, for example, the dissertation of David de Pina, *De Pleuritide* (Leyden, 1678); Moses Orobio de Castro, *De Hydrope* (Leyden, 1678); cf. Kaplan, "Jewish Students," pp. 74–5.

³⁹ R. L. Kagan, "Universities in Castille 1500–1700," *Past and Present* 49 (1970), p. 60.

such as Rabbi Shabbetai Sheftel Horowitz, Rabbi Moses Rivkes, Shabtai Meshorer Bas, and others, we do not get the slightest impression that they saw an essential difference between the Judaism of the Sephardi Jews and their own religion, or that they found themselves confronted with a deviation from what was accepted and legitimate in the traditional Jewish world.⁴⁰

From the foregoing it would seem appropriate to draw a clear line of separation between the world of the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century and the Jewish world in the second half of the eighteenth century in the centres where a great change took place in their traditional aspect. The Sephardi society of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century must be seen as a society whose structure, as well as the systems of thought by which it was supported, was still rooted in the Jewish traditional world.

* * *

However, having drawn an upper boundary line and distinguished between 17th-century western Sephardi society and Jewish society in the era of change during the eighteenth century, we must likewise draw boundaries between western Sephardi society and other Jewish societies in the world of Jewish tradition in the late Middle Ages and early modern times. Despite all that is common and similar, we may not ignore conspicuous differences between western Sephardi Jewish society, with the Amsterdam community being central, and traditional societies in the Jewish world. The Sephardi community in the west was not based on knowledge and values inherited from the past. This was a community which did not grow up and develop in an organic way with each generation passing on the heritage of its ancestors. Among the Sephardi Jews of the seventeenth century, one might speak of an *invented tradition* with a traditional community emerging *ex nihilo* under new conditions in new times. The founders of the Portuguese communities were themselves new to Judaism and the first Jewish community which they encountered was the one which they established by themselves. The founders had to wage a struggle with a uniquely problematic situation which no standard

⁴⁰ Y. Kaplan, "The Portuguese Community in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century, between Tradition and Change" (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Israeli Academy of Science and Humanities*, Vol. 7 (1988), pp. 161ff.

traditional Jewish community had known at that time: they had to redefine their Jewish identity for themselves and set boundaries for it. They came to Judaism with concepts from the world of Iberian Christianity, which they used, however paradoxical that may sound, to establish the framework of Jewish life and to give it content. Sceptical fideism, which was consolidated in Catholic lands during the Counter-Reformation and whose adherents taught the necessity of accepting the mastery of the church and the Pope out of a sceptical view of the inability of the individual to know religious truth with certainty, helped the former Marranos to justify the importance of the oral law and rabbinical authority at a time when they were forced to struggle against the scepticism of a fair number of their fellow congregants.⁴¹

When these Crypto-Jews returned to Judaism they draped the Jewish faith in Christian concepts which they had internalized while living as "New Christians." This caused a large number of them to grasp Judaism increasingly as a *religion* and not necessarily as an *all-embracing way of life*. To no small extent the change also took place as a result of their way of life as Crypto-Jews, who had become used to separating between inner religious reality, concealed within the four walls of their homes, and an outer and external way of life which they led on the basis of Christian and other values and concepts. Many of them came to the conclusion that *spiritual identification* with the Jewish tradition was more important than keeping the commandments.

Religious identity could not fully express their *ethnic and social identity* because the Marranos, who returned to Judaism, continued to regard those who had remained behind in the "lands of idolatry" as flesh of their flesh, even though they were severely critical of their remaining in the Iberian peninsula. Here we have a situation in which religious identity, on the one hand, failed to overlap with national and social solidarity, on the other hand. The Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam also viewed the Marrano population, both in the Iberian peninsula and in regions within the Spanish empire and in France, as part of the Nação, the Spanish-Portuguese nation, which is the vague term they used to refer to the entire Sephardi Jewish diaspora, including

⁴¹ Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); cf. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, pp. 313–22.

the Marrano branches and "New Christians." For example, in 1615 members of the Amsterdam community founded the "Santa Companhia de dotar orfas e donzelas" (a holy confraternity for endowing orphaned and poor girls), which was open to Jews and *conversos* alike, out of recognition that both belonged to the same national and social body. *Conversos* living in countries where Judaism was forbidden could be full members of that association without being required actually to perform the commandments. They merely had to have faith in the Jewish religion and spiritual identification with its doctrine. Although the leadership never granted ideological legitimacy to members of the "Nation" who remained outside Judaism, whether willingly or under duress, in the connections which they maintained with those members of the "Nation" in all sorts of areas and on many levels, they accorded them social legitimacy.⁴²

Moreover a population existed, not only at a geographical distance, which, despite its belonging to the national-social body of Sephardi Jewry, never returned to the Jewish religion. In every one of the lands of the western Sephardi diaspora, on the margins of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community, there were individuals and groups who had managed to evade the dread of the Iberian Inquisition but who preferred to remain in the "lands of freedom" without undertaking an explicit obligation towards their Jewish brethren. They did not join the Jewish congregation and refused to accept the yoke of the Jewish law and the Rabbinic commandments. Doubtless the attitude of the community leadership towards them was more severe than that towards the Marranos and "New Christians" remaining in Spain and Portugal for, by their very presence at the margins of the Jewish community, they posed a constant challenge and threat to the integrity of the traditional communal structure. They also served as a focus of attraction for others who could join them at any time. In Holland their presence was particularly significant in that the Christian society also included a not insignificant stratum of Christians who did not belong to any of the existing churches or denominations of Christianity. They aspired towards a non-confessional

⁴² See the printed regulations of this confraternity (Amsterdam, 1615; photocopy in the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam) PA 334 no. 1322, Chap. 8; cf. I. S. Révah, "Le premier règlement imprimé de la Santa Companhia . . . de dotar orfãos e donzelas pobres," *Boletim internacional de bibliografia luso-brasileira* 4 (1963), p. 653; cf. M. Bodian, "The 'Portuguese' Dowry Societies in Venice and Amsterdam", *Italia* 6 (1987), pp. 30–61.

Christianity and, in Holland, they were able to give relatively free expression to their views, thanks to the unique religious freedom prevailing there.

The unique political and social equilibrium which was created in the Dutch republic generally permitted non-conformist individuals and groups to exist and act with considerable freedom and without dependency on the traditional orthodox structures. Alongside these non-confessional Christians⁴³ a parallel phenomenon arose within the Sephardi community: "non-communal Jews," or "Jews without Judaism." Much evidence that has come down to us shows that this was an extensive and threatening phenomenon, deeply rooted in the life of the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam. Most of these Jews were not intellectuals and did not manage to lay down firm and serious principles. They did not accept the authority of the Halakha but had difficulty in formulating an alternative ideology. Nor did they intend to make their non-conformism into an instrument to change and reform within Jewish society. Some of them never joined the Jewish community, others joined but later left it, breaking off all contact.

The isolated few who succeeded in giving some systematic expression to their opposition to the Jewish establishment strove for "non-confessional Judaism," freed from the bonds of the Pharisaic tradition, the customs of which would not be subject to the Oral Law. They were repelled by the idea of the chosen people and their religious views accorded no special role to the Jews. Men such as Uriel da Costa, who approached universal deism, completely severed themselves from the Jewish tradition. This was also the path taken by Baruch Spinoza and Juan de Prado. They eschewed all sectarianism and separatism, ultimately cutting themselves off free from all affinity or tie with their community. In the end none of them presented an alternative system of values and ideas which could change Jewish society. Their criticism led them to a total denial of separate Jewish existence and, for that reason, they abandoned their community, in one way or another, without establishing a movement for change or any alternative organization.

Shalom Rosenberg has come to the conclusion, after studying the rich literature written against the various heterodox figures in the Amsterdam community and the western Sephardi diaspora, that this

⁴³ On this phenomenon, see L. Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise—la Conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVII^e siècle*, trans. Anna Posner (Paris, 1969).

was an "abortive movement."⁴⁴ It seems to me, however, that in using this term, Rosenberg has attributed intentions to these rebels against tradition and the establishment which in fact they did not have. There is no reason to use the concept "movement" in this case, because the approach of these heterodox Jews was essentially individualistic. They did not seek to change the community from within but rather to legitimize their desire to cut themselves off from their community and religion. It was not until the beginning of the second decade of the eighteenth century that a group of Jews from the Sephardi community in Amsterdam tried to give organized expression to their deviant views: they declared themselves "Karaites" and sought to establish a separate religious organization. They wanted to give a *different positive content to their Judaism* and, after reading the works of Richard Simon, they indeed came to the conclusion that the Karaites were "*juifs épurez*" (purified Jews), who had rejected the superstitions of the Talmud by taking a rationalistic view of the Biblical tradition.⁴⁵ If we are to trust the rather late testimony of H. Grégoire (1828), in the early eighteenth century fifty heads of households from among the Portuguese Jewish community in Amsterdam declared their wish to be known as "Karaites." According to him, the Dutch authorities rejected their request, apparently because they did not want to recognize a Jewish entity other than that which already existed and was recognized.⁴⁶ In response to this refusal, according to Grégoire, many of these "Karaites" were baptized in the Calvinist church. The Portuguese Jewish community registers list three of these "Karaites" who were excommunicated in 1712. Two of them are known clearly to have converted to Christianity at a later date.⁴⁷ If Grégoire did not exaggerate, and the number which he mentions is indeed close to reality, then here we have evidence of a significant effort to establish an alternative Jewish framework of life, intentionally deviating from the traditional and accepted Jewish

⁴⁴ Shalom Rosenberg, "Emunat Hakhamim," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. I. Twersky and B. Septimus (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 285–341.

⁴⁵ Y. Kaplan "Karaites in Early Eighteenth Century Amsterdam," in *Sceptics, Millenarians and Jews*, eds. by D. Katz and J. Israel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 196–236.

⁴⁶ H. Grégoire, *Histoire des sectes religieuses* (Paris, 1828), Vol. 3, p. 308; cf. Richard H. Popkin, "Les Caraites et l'émancipation des juifs," *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, XIII (1981), pp. 143ff.

⁴⁷ Kaplan, "Karaites," pp. 226ff.

pattern. The effort was thwarted by the authorities, who viewed the existing Jewish community as the sole authorized representative of Judaism and the single framework for Jewish organization. This was perhaps the first, and possibly also the only, effort in all of western Europe during early modern times by Jews to form a sectarian organization challenging traditional rabbinic Judaism and seeking to introduce real change in Jewish life. This effort was nipped in the bud because the conditions for its success had apparently not yet matured, not even in the Sephardi community in Amsterdam.

This uniquely problematic situation—the presence of marginal and heterodox Jews—was peculiar to the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish society of western Europe and molded its character. Its entire communal activity is marked by the necessity of dealing with the problems of the Marranos and the widespread intellectual ferment among them.

An ideology of change intended to alter the patterns of Jewish society was not consolidated in the western Sephardi communities during the period under discussion. As noted, challenges were relegated to the margins of the society and those who voiced them generally left the Jewish community. Nonetheless, in this society fissures in the traditional framework did develop with its very establishment. This is particularly notable in a central area such as the economy. In a community such as that of Amsterdam, almost all of whose members were involved in affairs involving credit, banking, and international or local trade, there were, nevertheless, almost no regulations passed regarding financial dealings. The few regulations related to these matters were mostly little more than demands to observe the laws of the state and they did not touch on Halakhic issues. Not only did the community leaders in Amsterdam lack control over financial dealings of the “New Christians” in the Iberian Peninsula, southern France, Antwerp, and the New World, who were in close contact with members of the community; they also found it difficult to supervise the financial dealings of their members, affairs which involved, among other things, long journeys. Many of these journeys were to countries where Judaism was forbidden so that the business travelers were required to disguise themselves as Christians once again and to refrain from performing the commandments. Fearing that the demand to impose the Halakha upon the wide-ranging and intricate financial system of the “Nation” would be a decree which this particular community could not obey, and that it would also prevent the effective operation of that system, the community preferred

to overlook the problem. Taking an adaptive approach, without giving it an ideological justification, they conferred almost full autonomy of values upon the economic institution.⁴⁸

This transition from diffuseness to specificity was also felt in other fields of life in which a tendency emerged to throw off the garment of tradition, with each field developing independent values. Thus, for example, members of the intellectual elite were in the habit of meeting in literary academies which nurtured the values of Spanish culture and art for the purpose of common social diversion. Each of these received its own justification, without any relation to the values of the rabbinic tradition.⁴⁹

While the dominance of the tradition was gradually reduced in various areas of life within the community, at the same time sacral values were concentrated within the four walls of the religious institution. Most of the regulations of the Sephardi community in Amsterdam dealt with synagogue affairs. This institution became the main bastion of tradition. The *Mahamad* (*Board of Wardens*) was scrupulous in maintaining an atmosphere of decorum there, excluding frivolous customs "which do not befit courteous people and are more fitting for the behaviour of barbarians."⁵⁰ Doubtless external influences played an important role here: the Catholic services in their homeland and, even more so, the sacral atmosphere which reigned in the Calvinist churches of Amsterdam—all made their mark upon the members of the community there. They were careful to maintain sacral content within the synagogue and to insulate it from all activities or concerns which were not directly connected to prayer. The distinction between sacred and profane was heightened both in time and place: clear times were devoted to the synagogue and clear times were set aside for transactions on the bourse. Although the Amsterdam regulations do not depart from the original Halakha, they have a marked tendency towards strictness in comparison to typical traditional communities of that time where, as a result of the frequency of meetings in the synagogue, and seeing that the diffuseness of religious values did not permit the restriction of the sacral solely to cer-

⁴⁸ Y. Kaplan, "The Portuguese Community," pp. 177–79.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁰ See *Livro de Ascarnoth* A of the community in the archive of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam, on deposit on the Municipal Archives, PA 334 no. 19, p. 181.

tain times and places, the synagogue was also a place to do business and to fill other social functions.⁵¹

Without a doubt, the observant eyes of curious Christian visitors to the synagogue, whose number gradually increased as that institution became more and more of an attraction for honorable tourists from Holland and other countries, also influenced the members of this community in setting norms of behaviour within it.

However, ties between members of the Sephardi community in Amsterdam and the non-Jewish world were not limited to passing encounters with Christian visitors to their sanctuary. Their relationship with the Christian world was one of the most fascinating features of their cultural and social world, and it is worthy of our attention. Indeed, in their apologetic writings, meant to strengthen the Jewish identity of the Marranos who returned to Judaism, the Sephardi Jews did not forget the saga of persecution they and their people had undergone in Christian lands. This literature rejects Christianity and its dogma and expresses revulsion for all its beliefs and symbols which even the relative tolerance enjoyed by the Jews in Calvinist Amsterdam was unable to efface easily. In this respect their position was sometimes more vehement than that of the rabbis who were their contemporaries in central and eastern Europe. These authorities removed Christianity from the category of idol worship in their writings,⁵² whereas in the apologetic literature of the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam and in the entire west, Christianity was impugned as the worst kind of idol worship ever invented by human wickedness. Despite their preference for Protestant denominations over papal Christianity, they often viewed both Catholics and Protestants as diverse expressions of a single kind of paganism.⁵³ However, the vehemence of their language is largely an expression of the great closeness with regard to their concepts and theological views between themselves and the Christian world from which they stemmed. No Jewish group before them had attained such close intimacy with the Christian world and such broad, direct, and profound acquaintance with their beliefs and opinions. The great expertise of the Sephardi Jews in the subtleties of Christianity coupled with the

⁵¹ Y. Kaplan, "The Portuguese Community," pp. 179–81.

⁵² J. Katz, "The Vicissitude of Three Apologetic Passages," *Zion* 23–4 (Hebrew, 1958), pp. 186ff.; idem, *Tradition and Crisis*, pp. 38ff.

⁵³ Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, pp. 252–62.

fact that many members of their community possessed knowledge of many languages, especially Latin, created the infrastructure for common discourse such as had been hitherto unknown in the relations between Jews and Christians. This not only facilitated theological debates between them, but it also made possible discourse and intellectual contacts on a wide variety of subjects. Protestant theologians and Hebraists found the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam ideal interlocutors for clarifying issues of interpretation related to the *Veritas Hebraica*. But philosophical, historical, and scientific issues were also the subject of correspondence and discussion between Protestant scholars and those of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community. Of this community in general, and of its spiritual spokesmen in particular, it could not by any means be said that "the outside world did not overly occupy their mind." Menasseh Ben Israel not only wrote more than three hundred letters to scholars of his day,⁵⁴ but also some of his works, such as *De Creatione Problemata XXX* (Amsterdam, 1635) and *De Terminis Vitae* (Amsterdam, 1639) were written both for Jewish and non-Jewish readers. The first part of his great work, *Conciliador*, was translated into Latin by Dionysius Vossius a year after its publication.⁵⁵ During the seventeenth century, this phenomenon became widespread among authors from the Sephardi Jewish community of Amsterdam and the western Sephardi diaspora in general. These works were not merely apologetic treatises meant to defend the Jews against the slanders of the Christian world, but rather works on theological, philosophical, or scientific topics which did not necessarily touch upon the Jewish-Christian controversy. The outstanding example of this is the philosophical and scientific encyclopedia of Isaac Cardoso which was published in Venice in 1673: *Philosophia Libera in septem libros distributa*.⁵⁶

Menasseh Ben Israel expressed pride in his connections with the world of Christian scholars: "I have held friendship with many great

⁵⁴ A. K. Offenbergh, "Some Remarks regarding Six Autograph Letters by Menasseh Ben Israel in the Amsterdam University Library," in *Menasseh Ben Israel and his World*, eds. Y. Kaplan, H. Méchoulán and Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), pp. 191–98.

⁵⁵ C. Roth, *A Life of Menasseh Ben Israel*, pp. 91–92; 94–95; Menasseh Ben Israel, *Espérance d'Israël*, Introduction, traduction et notes par H. Méchoulán et G. Nahon (Paris, 1979), pp. 40ff.

⁵⁶ Y. H. Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto*, pp. 216ff.

men, and the wisest and most eminent of all Europe; and they came to see me, from many places, at my house, and I had many friendly discourses with them."⁵⁷

Indeed, testimony which has come down to us from men such as Gerhard Vos, his son Dionysius, Grotius, Gaspard van Baerle (Barlaeus), Serarrius, and others support these remarks of Menasseh Ben Israel. The connections forged between him and some of his Christian colleagues occasionally transcended the instrumental character of relations between Christian scholars and learned rabbis during the Middle Ages and in traditional Jewish communities in early modern times. Frequently they have a marked tone of mutual tolerance and acknowledge the legitimacy of the faith of their opposite numbers. An expression of this can be found in the epigram by Barlaeus in honor of Menasseh Ben Israel which was printed at the beginning of *De Termino Vitae* along with other poems dedicated to the author by Sephardi Jews:

Vera placet, placet agregijs conatibus author,
Et pietas fidei disparis ista placet.
Cunctorum est coluisse Deum. Non unius aevi,
Non populi unius credimus, esse pium.
Si sapimus diversa Deo vivamus amici,
Doctaque; meus precio constet ubique; suo.
Haec fidei vox summa meae est. Haec crede
Menasse
Si ego Cristiades, sic eris Abramides.⁵⁸

Barlaeus emphasized here that their friendship is firm, even though they are of different religions, and even though they shall remain such throughout their lives. His words imply that friendship can bridge differences in faith and that it does not imply the expectation or hope that one's friend, whose faith differs from one's own, will ultimately convert. According to one source, Isaac Orobio concluded his "Friendly Conversation" with Philip van Limborch, one of the major discussions between Jews and Christians during the seventeenth century, with the following words: "every one ought to

⁵⁷ Menasseh Ben Israel, *Vindiciae Judaeorum, or a Letter in Answer to certain Questions propounded by a Noble and Learned Gentleman, etc.* (London, 1656), p. 31: cf. Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh Ben Israel*, p. 141.

⁵⁸ His poem was printed at the opening of the book after the lines of Himanuel Nehamias, Mosseh Pinto, Iona Abravanel, and Daniel Abravanel.

continue in his own Religion since it was much easier to attack another Man's than to prove ones own."⁵⁹

Clearly statements like this do not express any general spirit of conciliatory toleration but nor are they isolated. In fact, they point to an attitude of religious tolerance which existed even before the principles of tolerance were articulated at the end of the seventeenth and in the early eighteenth centuries. This attitude was, in a certain sense, even firmer than that of Mendelssohn's times, among his non-Jewish intellectual friends, who could not imagine a Jewish intellectual who would not ultimately convert. Despite the absence of a rational-universalist world view, sometimes conditions emerged in the cosmopolitan and pluralistic Amsterdam of the seventeenth century which were favorable to dialogue between Christians and Jews, pockets of tolerance which permitted friendly relations, association for its own sake or to clarify common theoretical issues, beyond any religious disagreement.

The Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam took an active part in the theological and philosophical discussions which engaged the gentile world and, once they did so, their opinion was accepted as one of the legitimate stands that could be taken by savants of various kinds in the Republic of Letters. They occasionally found themselves part of a coalition of learned Christians who set out to refute those who challenged the shared foundations of the two religious faiths and traditions. In this light, for example, one must view the participation of Isaac Orobio in the polemic against the metaphysics of Spinoza which took place in Holland in the early 1680's. His voice was heard, and his words were published in philosophical circles together with the objections of Christian thinkers like Philip van Limborch, Aubert de Versé, and Abraham Lemmerman.⁶⁰ While taking part in this polemic, Orobio did not find it necessary to mention, even implicitly, the specifically Jewish aspects of his opposition to Spinoza and he treated only the general philosophical contents.

These contacts between Jewish intellectuals and their non-Jewish colleagues could not but recall the connections formed between Mendelssohn and the Jews of his circle and the German intellectuals of their time. In 17th-century Amsterdam, as in 18th-century Berlin, long-

⁵⁹ These remarks were presented by the editor of the English translation of the autobiography of Uriel d'Acosta. *The Remarkable Life of Uriel Acosta* (London, 1740), p. 6.

⁶⁰ Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism*, pp. 263–70.

lasting ties were formed between Jews and Christians for the purpose of cultivating spiritual concerns. But in Amsterdam these ties were not based on a universalist, rationalist ideology which legitimized the neutralization of religious differences. Nor were they meant to reform the society on the basis of a shared *vision of the desired future*. These ties and the coalitions formed between Jews and Christians were made possible primarily as a result of common discourses. Those associations mentioned above between the Jews and Christians against those who were viewed as their common enemies, whether Catholic, deists, sceptics, Spinozists, or atheists, were not meant to remove the barriers between the sides or change the societies of the allies but rather, from the start, to *strengthen the traditional and conservative orientations within them*.

* * *

The case of the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century illustrates the degree to which traditional culture is not a uniform and consistent system of general rules. It shows how far traditionalism and modernism are from being uni-dimensional and it demonstrates how simplistic it would be to see traditional and modern societies as dichotomies. The Sephardi society of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century was indeed essentially a traditional society because the basic cultural principles of traditionalism were found in it at the foci of social and cultural structures. While structural changes took place in various parts of it, these changes were not accompanied by a change in the meaning attributed to tradition, and the conception of change as a positive value in itself was still lacking.⁶¹

Nonetheless this was a unique traditional society: it was created out of a renewed encounter between the members of this community and the tradition from which they had been cut off for generations when they changed from "New Christians" to "New Jews." This encounter itself took place in a period and social and cultural milieu in which the earliest intellectual ferment was taking place, described so well by Paul Hazard, and which ultimately led to deep changes in the European consciousness.⁶² These "New Jews", because of the cultural background from which they sprang and because of

⁶¹ S. N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization, Protest and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 36-50.

⁶² Paul Hazard, *The European Mind, 1690-1715* (London, 1964), pp. 1-46.

their natural affinity for the sources of European culture, could not remain indifferent to this ferment—and when they consolidated the boundaries of their new identity by means of their invented tradition, they were forced to accommodate it to new historical conditions. This accommodation was made under the constraint of circumstantial conjunctions without an ideological justification. This was the source of both its strength and its weakness. On the one hand, the conjunction permitted structural changes to be made without inner struggles and resistance; but, as Katz phrased it, “Factual, nonreflective accommodation . . . is by nature locale-bound.”⁶³ The model of the Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam could not be transferred and imitated and it was even difficult to maintain it in Holland itself when conditions changed.

Though one might differ with T. M. Endelmans’s thesis, i.e., that among most of the Jews of Europe accommodation to modernity was made without an ideological challenge to the basic foundations of traditional Judaism,⁶⁴ without doubt the following statement of his is valid:

The existence of varieties of early modern Judaism. . . suggests that no single overarching historical model can be employed to discuss the modernization of all segments of western European Jewry. . . . There was no uniform road to immersion in modern culture and the secular state, no single path from tradition to modernity.⁶⁵

The example of the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam is one of those “varieties.” Certainly, among these Jews, instances of religious laxity and religious indifference were not lacking and there were a variety of other expressions of the weakening of the practical bond with the tradition among many kinds of individuals. But far more significant and impressive is the accommodation to change and to the challenges of modernity while attempting to preserve the tradition which characterized the alternate path to modernity taken by the Sephardi community of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century.

⁶³ J. Katz, ed., *Toward Modernity. The European Jewish Model* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1987), Introduction, p. 3.

⁶⁴ T. M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714–1830. Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), pp. 7–8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

JACQUELINE LAGRÉE

SOUVENIRS

Ma première rencontre avec Richard Popkin, que je n'appelais pas encore Dick, date d'avril 1991 à Cortona, dans ces merveilleux paysages des environs du lac Trasimène, lors d'un colloque organisé par Paolo Cristofolini consacré aux premières réactions au *Traité Théologico-politique* de Spinoza.¹ Popkin y parlait de Stoupe et du cercle de Condé et moi *De tribus impostoribus magnis* de C. Kortholt. Wim Klever, sous le titre "L'erreur de Lambertus van Velthuysen et des Velthuyseniens" n'y proposait pas seulement une réfutation de Velthuysen mais, en filigrane, une critique de l'analyse que Pierre-François Moreau et moi-même avions donnée du livre de L. Meyer, *Philosophia s. Scripturae interpres* que nous venions de traduire. Le débat fut fort vif. Nous discutâmes pied à pied le sens de la double négation en latin et la différence entre les deux herméneutiques, meyerienne et spinoziste. Pour W. Klever, critiquer Meyer, c'était déjà critiquer Spinoza; souligner quelque différence entre les deux amis, c'était se ranger dans les rangs des adversaires du rationalisme en général et de Spinoza en particulier; bref, c'était pactiser avec l'ennemi. Popkin s'amusa fort de cette passe d'armes et de ce qu'on pût voir renaître, sur les collines de l'Ombrie, dans les vieilles salles du Palazzo, avec la même fougue sinon avec les mêmes risques, un de ces débats qui avaient enflammé le XVII^e siècle. C'est à cette occasion, je crois, que je conquis sa sympathie puis son amitié.

Notre deuxième rencontre marquante se situe à Dublin, en juillet 1994. Dick y avait rassemblé dans les vieilles salles de la Bibliothèque Marsh, demeurée inchangée depuis sa création au XVIII^e siècle par l'évêque de s. Patrick, une pléiade de chercheurs venus de divers pays et de diverses disciplines (philologie, histoire des idées ou de la philosophie, biblistes) pour discuter de *Biblical criticism and latin judaica*.

¹ Publié sous le titre *The Spinozistic Heresy. The Debate on the Tractatus theologico-Politicus, 1670-1677* (Amsterdam: APA, Holland UP, 1995).

Il me chargea de lire le pesant volume que R. de Mansvelt avait consacré à réfuter le TTP et à présenter une comparaison entre Meyer, Spinoza et Mansvelt sur les rapports entre religion naturelle et religion révélée. Il fallait bien la fougue, l'enthousiasme et la chaleur communicative de Popkin pour que j'accepte ce pensum. Mais Dick a le don d'allécher ses amis. Il nous envoya avant la conférence un énorme paquet: une photocopie de l'inventaire manuscrit, fait au XVIII^e siècle, de l'ensemble des livres de la Bibliothèque, pour nous inciter à faire sur place des recherches imprévues. En compulsant ce trésor dont il fallait trouver les clés, en bavardant avec les membres de la "famille Popkin élargie" (ses élèves, ses disciples, les chercheurs qui un jour ou l'autre avaient eu l'occasion de travailler avec lui) qui se retrouvaient dans le petit hotel confortable proche de Trinity College où Dick avait ses habitudes, je compris soudain ce qui faisait pour moi la fascination du personnage—et parfois aussi mon agacement devant des hypothèses ténues si judicieusement exposées et développées que, contre toute évidence, elles devenaient pour lui des certitudes: Dick est le fils d'un auteur de romans policiers. De sa mère et de ses héros romanesques, il a gardé ce goût des conjectures, des pistes que l'on suit pas à pas et, si l'on parvient à lui montrer que, décidément non, Spinoza n'a pas rencontré le prince de Condé à Utrecht et qu'il faut revoir à la baisse l'importance du cercle de Condé sur la pensée spinoziste, il vous l'accordera car l'ampleur de ses connaissances et la rigueur scientifique le feront toujours s'incliner devant la vérité avérée. Mais ce ne sera pas sans quelque regret: l'hypothèse était si belle! D'autres diront mieux que moi ce que chacun sait, l'importance de R. Popkin pour le renouveau d'intérêt porté au scepticisme à l'âge classique, pour les mouvements millénaristes, pour l'articulation entre histoire des idées et histoire de la philosophie. C'est au travail pionnier qui fut le sien que des travaux comme les miens sur la religion naturelle et sur l'horizon religieux du spinoziste doivent aussi d'avoir eu quelque écho. Mais peu savent quels trésors de délicatesse cache cet homme à la voix rauque. J'en donnerai une anecdote pour finir. Ayant appris que mon anniversaire tombait lors du colloque de Dublin, Dick fit en sorte que j'eusse droit, le soir venu, au traditionnel gâteau et à l'happy birthday to you. J'étais loin des miens mais la grande famille Popkin se substituait à la mienne car le goût du savoir et le vif plaisir de l'humour perdent pour lui toute saveur s'ils ne sont pas assaisonnés du miel de l'amitié.

LA QUERELLE DU PAGANISME²

Jacqueline Lagrée

Le mot “paganisme” vient du bas latin *paganus*³ et désigne la religion polythéiste des Anciens. Les Réformés, pour rendre à l'Eglise la pureté des temps évangéliques, veulent réduire le nombre des croyances et des rites et critiquent le christianisme romain comme résurgence du paganisme, religion superstitieuse des Anciens. En dehors de la querelle des rites, les irénistes religieux défendent le principe de la possibilité du salut des païens vertueux⁴ qui, ignorant la révélation, ont suivi scrupuleusement la loi naturelle, respecté la justice, aidé leur prochain et cru en l'immortalité de l'âme. L'argument théologique pour le justifier sera qu'à ceux qui ont vécu vertueusement, la grâce divine n'a pas manqué au moment de la mort. Croire qu'ils peuvent être sauvés sans la grâce serait tomber dans le pélagianisme mais on doit croire que la grâce ne leur a pas manqué.⁵ Le paganisme ainsi entendu inclut les religions d'Asie, d'Amérique du nord, des terres australes mais exclut l'Islam, religion monothéiste postérieure à la révélation évangélique.

Cette querelle n'est pas strictement religieuse. Elle comporte des enjeux théologiques: le problème de la distribution de la grâce et de l'élection; des enjeux philosophiques: que vaut la nature humaine? celui du statut de la morale stoïcienne au sein de la morale chrétienne; des enjeux métaphysiques: concernant la causalité et la toute puissance divine.

² Cette étude reprend, en le résumant quelque peu, un exposé fait au séminaire d'histoire de la philosophie et d'histoire des idées (CERPHI) du Pr P.-F. Moreau, à l'ENS de Fontenay aux Roses, le 16 XI 1994. La partie consacrée à Erasme a été partiellement reprise dans P. Jacopin et J. Lagrée, *Erasme, Humanisme et langage* (Paris: PUF, 1996).

³ Le mot est attesté en français dès 1546. *Paganus* signifie paysan ou civil par opposition aux militaires.

⁴ Socrate, Sénèque, Epictète voire Confucius.

⁵ “C'est aussi une maxime en théologie qui ne reçoit point de contradiction que Dieu ne refuse jamais sa grâce à ceux qui font tout ce qu'ils peuvent pour s'en rendre digne. Or les Payens qui ont vécu vertueusement suivant les lumières du droit de nature & soumettant leur libre arbitre à la raison, ont fait tout ce qui était en leur pouvoir puisqu'ils ne connaissaient point d'autre Loi que la naturelle. On

ERASME

Le paganisme désigne d'abord pour Erasme toute forme de superstition comme le culte des saints et des reliques ou les processions.⁶ Erasme qualifie de *judaïsme*⁷ ou de pharisaïsme le ritualisme rigide des religieux. L'attitude judaïque correspond au primat des cérémonies extérieures sur le culte intérieur de justice et charité, à la préférence accordée au *signe* plutôt qu'à la *substance* de la piété,⁸ à la lettre morte plutôt qu'à l'esprit qui fait vivre.⁹

Il existe en outre un paganisme savant dans lequel on distinguera plusieurs niveaux:

- La poésie païenne, dès qu'elle parle des dieux est un tissu de mensonges et de descriptions théologiques scandaleuses, une école d'immoralité. La représentation antique des démons, fût-ce celui de Socrate, est douteuse, car le démon n'est pas un ange gardien; mais en même temps, Boccace¹⁰ réhabilite la poésie latine par le biais de l'allégorie: le poète invente des fables pour dire obliquement la vérité.

- La philosophie païenne s'oppose à la *philosophia Christi*: cette expression, apparue en 1516 et constante chez Erasme, oppose la sagesse chrétienne, folie pour les philosophes, à la philosophie des païens, en suivant Paul.¹¹

- L'expression en langue latine de la foi chrétienne est ambivalente: Erasme critique la multiplicité des œuvres d'art de tonalité païenne à Rome, haut lieu de chrétienté:

C'est le paganisme, crois-moi Nosoponus; c'est le paganisme qui cherche à persuader ainsi nos oreilles et nos cœurs; nous ne sommes chrétiens que de nom. . . . Nous n'osons pas professer ouvertement le paganisme; le nom de cicéroniens nous sert de couverture.¹²

doit donc croire que Dieu ne leur a pas dénié sa grâce ni son assistance & par conséquent qu'ils peuvent être du nombre des bienheureux." La Mothe Le Vayer, *De la vertu des payens* (Paris, 1670), p. 31.

⁶ On retrouve ce sens chez Calvin: "Tant y a que le peuple qui se dit chrétien en est venu jusque là qu'il a pleinement idolâtré en cet endroit autant que le firent jamais païens. Car on s'est prosterné et agenouillé devant les reliques, tout ainsi que devant Dieu." *Traité des reliques* (Paris: Bossard, 1921), p. 90.

⁷ "Le Christ arrêtera ce flot sans fin des glorifications. D'où sortent, dira-t-il, ces nouvelles observances judaïques?" Erasme, *Eloge de la folie*, § LIV.

⁸ Erasme, *Banquet religieux*, en *Œuvres choisies* (Paris: livre de poche, 1991), p. 655; cité OC.

⁹ Cf. *Enchiridion*, Canon 5.

¹⁰ Boccace, *Genealogia deorum*.

¹¹ Paul, I Cor. I, 18-20.

¹² Erasme, *Cicéronien*; OC, p. 951.

Les contempteurs médiévaux du paganisme traitaient différemment poètes et philosophes: ils abhorraient les poètes mais faisaient un usage démesuré d'Aristote et Averroès. Erasme, lui, considère la scolastique comme une philosophie païenne parce qu'elle est remplie d'Aristote. Il lui préfère Platon mais plus encore Socrate, pour sa conduite plus que pour sa pensée. Mais il s'oppose violemment au paganisme savant des italiens qui critiquent son style comme trop moderne.¹³

C'est l'objet du *Cicéronien*, dialogue où Erasme se moque d'une nouvelle mode qui veut qu'on ne puisse écrire bon latin si l'on n'emploie pas exclusivement des formes verbales qui se trouvent explicitement dans le corpus de Cicéron. Ce qui a un double effet pervers: transformer le latin en langue morte et pire, exprimer, donc penser, le christianisme dans les catégories de la religion païenne, donc le détruire entièrement. Par exemple, appeler Dieu *Jupiter Optimus maximus* c'est nier le Christ¹⁴ comme deuxième personne de la Trinité. La Vierge sera nommée Diane; l'excommunication, proscription; les apôtres, légats; le Pape, flamine de Jupiter; le prophète, devin;¹⁵ la constitution conciliaire, senatus-consulte. Même en latin, "il faut parler en chrétien à des chrétiens."¹⁶ La transposition du vocabulaire de Cicéron ou de Tacite dans l'ordre religieux rabat le religieux sur le politique aux dépens des connotations théologiques spécifiques du christianisme. Il faut donc former des néologismes latins pour exprimer la vérité chrétienne.

En fait, on voit ici scolastiques et humanistes s'accuser mutuellement de paganisme: les théologiens scolastiques en accusent les humanistes parce qu'ils aiment trop les poètes anciens;¹⁷ les humanistes en accusent les théologiens parce que leur théologie s'exprime dans une grille aristotélicienne et qu'ils se soucient plus de montrer que les dogmes chrétiens, comme l'immortalité de l'âme, ne sont pas contraires à la vérité philosophique (aristotélicienne) que de prêcher la doctrine évangélique. Comme les vocables d'athée et d'épicurien, le terme de paganisme est, au XVI^e siècle, un terme plus polémique que rigoureux.

¹³ "Je n'ai qu'un scrupule: je crains que, sous le couvert de la renaissance des lettres antiques, le paganisme ne tente de redresser la tête car il y a aussi parmi les chrétiens des gens qui ne reconnaissent le Christ, peu s'en faut, que de nom mais qui, au dedans, ne respirent que paganisme." Lettre 541 à Capiton de 1517.

¹⁴ Le Christ est alors désigné sous le vocable d'Apollon, dieu de l'intelligence, lumière.

¹⁵ C'est en partie le vocabulaire employé par Spinoza dans le *Traité Théologico-politique*.

¹⁶ Erasme; OC, p. 941.

¹⁷ Homère, Virgile, Horace, Térence.

Conjointement avec cette rupture il existe aussi une forme de continuité, mauvaise ou bonne, entre paganisme et christianisme, ce qui autorisera une théorie du bon usage des *bonae literae* parallèlement aux *sanctae Literae*.

Dans le cadre de la continuité mauvaise, Erasme souligne fréquemment et ironiquement l'analogie entre les rites païens et chrétiens: purifications, professions de foi, sacrifices pour la consécration des sanctuaires, cérémonies d'initiation.¹⁸ Même le baptême est proche des cérémonies païennes de purification.¹⁹

Dieu hait ta religion épaisse et grossière. Tu es baptisé. Ne va pas te figurer aussitôt que tu es chrétien. Ton âme entière ne respire encore que le monde. A l'extérieur tu es chrétien; au dedans, plus païen qu'un païen.²⁰

Mais les païens ne sont pas des pré-chrétiens; ce sont les chrétiens ritualistes qui sont des païens déguisés. Les professions de foi monastiques avec leurs rites réservés sont une résurgence des religions à mystères.²¹ Certaines croyances populaires sur les saints dérivent de croyances païennes: l'autel de saint Patrice en Irlande semble né de l'autel de Trophonius.²² Les cultes des saints thaumaturges répètent celui d'Esculape: "si auparavant, dans les maladies, on invoquait Apollon ou Esculape, on invoque maintenant saint Roch ou saint Antoine." Le culte des saints, avec ses particularismes nationaux et ses fins intéressées, perpétue le paganisme: "jadis aux jeux sacrés, on portait en procession Bacchus, Vénus, Neptune, Silène avec les Satyres." Cette transition a d'abord été voulue par les Pères dans un but pédagogique, mais ce temps est désormais dépassé.²³

¹⁸ *Lingua, Opera omnia* édition J. Leclerc, Leyde, 1703-1706 (repr. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1961), (LB) IV 747A; Cf. Jacques Chomarat, *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Erasme* (Paris: Belles lettres, 1981), p. 437.

¹⁹ *Banquet religieux*, in *Les Colloques*, trad. Jarl Priel (Paris: Editions d'aujourd'hui, 1934), p. 668.

²⁰ Erasme, *Enchiridion*, canon 5.

²¹ Cf. les cultes de Cérès, Osiris et Isis. Lettre 296.

²² Erasme, *Adage* 677.

²³ "Comme les païens avaient coutume de purifier les champs par des rites stupides ou de se concilier Cérès par des cantiques que chantaient jeunes gens et jeunes filles, <les Pères voulurent> que les chrétiens portent autour des terres l'étendard de la croix avec des hymnes en l'honneur de Dieu et des saints; que le soldat partant en guerre se recommande non plus à Jupiter mais à saint Georges ou à sainte Barbe; que les cités adoptent en guise de dieux tutélaires Bavon, Marc ou n'importe quel autre disciple du Christ; comme ils avaient coutume d'éloigner la foudre par des claquements de langue ou d'autres remèdes profanes et superstitieux." *Modus*

De façon plus positive, l'examen de la vertu des païens ou de leurs conceptions scientifiques ou juridiques montre dans la philosophie du Christ la restauration d'une nature qui fut créée bonne.²⁴ "Il y a dans les livres des païens beaucoup de choses qui s'accordent avec la doctrine du Christ."²⁵ Le péché originel a bien détérioré la nature humaine mais sans la détruire; la grâce n'a pas manqué aux païens, même si elle n'a surabondé que pour les chrétiens. Considérer la nature humaine comme entièrement corrompue par le péché implique qu'il n'y ait rien de bon chez les auteurs païens; inversement l'amour de l'antiquité et l'appréciation d'une sagesse antique implique que la nature humaine ait conservé, après la chute, une certaine bonté. On peut en effet trouver des préceptes de vie droite chez les moralistes païens, même si le modèle et les règles de vie parfaite ne se trouvent que dans l'Evangile. Toutes les écoles de philosophie antique s'accordent pour unir bonheur et vertu. La plupart des anciens sages ont pensé l'âme immortelle, refusé de répondre à l'injustice par l'injustice, préféré la quête du vrai à la satisfaction des passions du corps.

Relisons "Les Silènes d'Alcibiade".²⁶ le Silène désigne "une chose à première vue sans valeur et risible mais admirable si on la considère plus profondément et de plus près"²⁷ comme ces figurines grotesques qui, une fois ouvertes, montraient une divinité. Alcibiade comparait Socrate au silène, en raison du contraste entre la laideur de son corps et la beauté de son âme; Erasme y joint les figures des cyniques Antisthène et Diogène, d'Epictète, et finalement du Christ, sublime dans l'humilité, Dieu sous une apparence insignifiante, philosophe éloigné de ce que le monde appelle philosophie. Mais il existe aussi des silènes inversés: ceux qui sous une apparence de grandeur, se faisant appeler Excellence Sérénissime, offrent l'apparence extérieure du christianisme et sont à l'intérieur vice et cruauté comme certains moines, évêques, théologiens. On appelle Souverain Pontife celui qui ne doit être que le serviteur de la communauté.²⁸ Le recours à une métaphore ancienne a ici une double fonction

orandi Deum; Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique*, p. 439. Bavon moine du VII^{ème} siècle était patron de Gand; saint Marc, l'évangéliste, est le patron de Venise.

²⁴ Erasme, *Paraclysus*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Adage 2201 qui renvoie à l'*Alcibiade* majeur de Platon.

²⁷ Chomarat, OC, p. 402.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

d'élucidation, critique et apologétique. *Saint Socrate priez pour nous!*²⁹

Lorsque les auteurs païens sont pris comme des modèles de vie chrétienne, l'opposition terminologique entre paganisme et christianisme se déplace vers une autre: celle du profane et du saint. C'est le cas dans le *Banquet religieux*, où l'on rencontre la célèbre formule: "Quand je lis de tels traits de ces grands hommes, j'ai peine à me retenir de dire: 'Saint Socrate, priez pour nous!'" La ligne de rupture entre saint et profane est la piété et l'utilité morale:

On ne doit pas appeler profane ce qui est pieux et sert la morale. Il est vrai que les Saintes Lettres ont partout l'autorité la plus haute mais il m'arrive quelquefois de rencontrer des choses dites par les Anciens ou écrites par des païens, même poètes, et qui ont un caractère si pur, si saint, si divin, que je ne puis croire qu'au moment où ils les écrivaient, leur intelligence n'était pas animée par quelque bon génie. Peut-être l'esprit du Christ se répand-il plus largement que nous ne l'admettons. Et il y a dans la communauté des saints beaucoup d'hommes qui ne figurent pas sur notre catalogue.³⁰

Bien des moines sont d'authentiques païens; Socrate, Diogène, Caton, Epictète, eux, ont enseigné et pratiqué l'enseignement moral du christianisme. Socrate n'est pas loué par Erasme comme philosophe, pour ses découvertes théoriques³¹ mais comme un maître de sagesse.³²

Du bon usage du paganisme

Il y a donc un bon et un mauvais usage du paganisme et cela doit suffire à régler la querelle. Le danger concerne les mœurs: "Je ne voudrais pas qu'en étudiant les lettres païennes, tu absorbes en même temps les mœurs païennes."³³

²⁹ Erasme, *Paraclysés* et *Banquet religieux*, p. 667.

³⁰ *Banquet religieux*, pp. 662 & 664; parmi ces saints implicites du catalogue, figurent Cicéron, Caton, Plutarque, Socrate, Epictète.

³¹ L'induction, la définition, la critique de la sophistique...

³² "Socrate enseigne qu'un homme n'est pas juste quand il préférerait cesser d'être juste plutôt que d'accepter de passer pour injuste. Il enseigne que nous devons détourner notre âme de l'amour des choses visibles et la tourner vers l'étude de celles qui sont vraies et éternelles. Il enseigne qu'il faut non pas craindre mais plutôt souhaiter la mort quand on a vécu selon le bien. Il enseigne qu'on ne doit pas mettre sa confiance en ses actes mais que celui qui s'est efforcé autant qu'il le pouvait de vivre purement doit avoir un bon espoir en la bénignité divine. Cela n'est-il pas en accord avec la doctrine évangélique?" *Epistola de philosophica evangelica*, LB V, *4 verso; Cf. Chomarar, *Grammaire et rhétorique*, p. 434 n. 179.

³³ Erasme, *Enchiridion*.

Le bon usage, réglé, pratiqué avec mesure, discernement et métamorphose, est exprimé par des métaphores patristiques: celle des *abeilles* qui, sur les fleurs, laissent les poisons et pompent le suc salubre;³⁴ celle de la *captive*,³⁵ à qui l'on coupe les cheveux et les ongles avant de l'épouser, ce qui signifie que la culture païenne ne peut être adoptée sans être purifiée et amputée de certains de ses éléments; celle des vases précieux volés par les Hébreux aux Égyptiens,³⁶ sauf qu'Erasme ne reprend pas le thème de l'usurpation de la vérité par les païens, comme le faisait Augustin.

Comment donc utiliser les auteurs païens en dehors de la formation rhétorique et de l'élégance du style? Il y a d'abord:

– la possibilité d'une interprétation morale des fables³⁷ ou l'utilisation pédagogique, éducative, des comédies latines. Térence présente, dans ses comédies, le modèle de ce qu'il ne faut pas faire: "Que sont en effet les comédies, sinon un esclave qui fait des sottises, un adolescent rendu fou par l'amour, une courtisane enjoueuse et effrontée, un vieillard bougon, maussade et avare?"³⁸

– Le recours aux satiristes, notamment Lucien,³⁹ pour dénoncer le polythéisme populaire masqué: Erasme a traduit en latin la satire intitulée *Alexandre ou le faux prophète*. S'il y a une conciliation possible, chez Erasme, du paganisme et du christianisme, c'est qu'il lit les païens, les poètes plus que les philosophes, dans une optique chrétienne.

La coupure entre christianisme et paganisme est ici moins forte que la coupure entre la foule et les lettrés. Les lettrés, païens comme chrétiens, ont pratiqué une religion en esprit et en vérité, même si la

³⁴ Saint Basile, *Aux jeunes gens sur la manière de tirer profit des lettres helléniques IV*; Cf. Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique*, p. 170.

³⁵ Cf. Jérôme, Lettre 21 à Damase reprenant Deut. 21:11-12. "Si, en les emmenant captifs, vous voyez parmi les prisonniers de guerre une femme qui soit belle, que vous conceviez pour elle de l'affection et que vous vouliez l'épouser/Vous la ferez entrer dans votre maison, où elle se raser les cheveux et se coupera les ongles."

³⁶ Augustin, *Doctrine chrétienne*, II, 40, trad. fr. J.-F. Bourgoing de Villefort (Paris: J. B. Coignard, 1701), p. 155: "Quant à ce qu'on appelle les philosophes, si par hasard, ils ont dit quelques vérités conformes à celles de notre religion, surtout les platoniciens, bien loin de craindre de nous en instruire, nous devons les leur enlever comme à des usurpateurs et les faire passer à notre usage."

³⁷ Ex. Circé, les sirènes d'Ulysse. Ceci se voit le plus nettement dans les *Adages*, y compris pour donner un sens chrétiennement recevable à des adages incompatibles à la lettre avec le christianisme tel que "l'homme est un dieu pour l'homme."

³⁸ Lettre 31.

³⁹ Lucien inspire le genre et le style de l'*Eloge de la folie*.

religion vraie est le seul christianisme; la foule ignorante et superstitieuse a partout pratiqué des cultes polythéistes. Chez Erasme l'antagonisme du paganisme et du christianisme se déplace vers l'opposition entre superstition et foi, discours et pratique, ritualisme et charité.

Erasme s'attachait à marquer la rupture, sur fond de continuité limitée, entre paganisme et christianisme. Avec Herbert de Cherbury d'un côté, Malebranche de l'autre, la querelle apparaît de manière vive entre d'un côté une récupération provocatrice du paganisme et de l'autre son refus radical justifiant en retour une métaphysique de l'ordre et de l'unité et de la simplicité des lois par lesquelles Dieu gouverne le monde.

HERBERT DE CHERBURY

Herbert de Cherbury utilise abondamment dans *La religion des Païens* les travaux antérieurs de Selden, Vossius et Colli mais pour aboutir à la thèse radicale de l'identité foncière de toutes les religions. Démontrer la possibilité du salut des païens est la condition nécessaire pour croire en une providence universelle.⁴⁰ C'est une notion commune que de définir Dieu comme *perfectus immensus, aeternus*;⁴¹ croire que Dieu ait pu laisser des hommes, ignorant cette révélation, manquer des moyens du salut alors qu'il a pourvu tous les peuples des moyens naturels de la santé, serait nier cette providence, donc contredire la notion commune. Un salut réservé arbitrairement à quelques-uns témoignerait aussi d'une cruauté incompatible avec la nature divine.

Dans ce "labyrinthe d'erreurs" des religions établies, le laïc curieux qui cherche sérieusement et librement son chemin de salut trouvera bientôt un fil d'Ariane, le *credo minimum*, formé de cinq articles fondamentaux: (1) Il existe une divinité suprême; (2) il faut lui rendre un culte; (3) vertu et piété sont les parties principales du culte divin; (4) il faut se repentir de ses fautes; (5) la divine Bonté dispense récompenses et punitions en cette vie et dans l'autre.⁴² Le

⁴⁰ Cherbury, *De religione Gentilium*, 1/1 (désormais noté *DRG* en premier la page de l'édition latine de 1663, en second la p. de la trad. anglaise de 1707).

⁴¹ Cherbury, *DRG*, 1/2.

⁴² Telle est la formulation des 5 articles dans le *DRG*, 2/3-4; pour d'autres formulations voir *La religion du laïc* (cité *RL*) 152/182 et mon commentaire dans *Le salut du laïc* (Paris, 1991).

comparatisme religieux aboutit donc à mettre en évidence l'invariant d'une variation proliférante, inévitable et naturelle, mais dont les circonstances et les modalités sont accidentelles.

Loin d'assigner la fondation des religions païennes à l'imposture des princes et des prêtres comme le feront les Libertins, Herbert l'explique par des arguments naturalistes. Grotius⁴³ expliquait les aberrations des croyances ou des rites païens par l'action des démons; Herbert les réfère toujours à des causes naturelles.⁴⁴

L'interprétation allégorique aura pour tâche de retrouver l'invariant naturel derrière les figurations mythiques. La multiplicité des cultes renvoie au seul vrai culte intérieur ou pratique de la vertu; de la multiplicité des dieux on remontera à l'unique divinité suprême dont les divers noms expriment les divers aspects ou bienfaits. Herbert n'hésite pas à reprendre aux érudits⁴⁵ des étymologies qui nous paraissent aujourd'hui bien hasardeuses: le radical *Jah* serait commun à Jahvé, Jéhovah, Jupiter; Adonaï, c'est Adonis; Israël, Saturne en raison du parallèle du sacrifice des fils. Le soleil, dieu suprême des païens, est la première représentation du dieu suprême et tous les peuples l'ont adoré.

Reste alors à séparer le bon grain (la religion naturelle et commune à toutes) de l'ivraie (les aspects mythiques et superstitieux), à dégager les parties saines de la religion païenne, ce qui requiert d'abord de la connaître sans préjugés et de rassembler toutes les informations dont on peut disposer en un seul corps de doctrine.⁴⁶ On pourra alors montrer que le dieu suprême des Anciens est le même dieu que le nôtre⁴⁷ et que tous les rites se ressemblent: ceux d'entrée dans l'Eglise comme le baptême et les rites d'initiation; les purifications: lustration, jeûne;⁴⁸ examen de conscience, etc. Les religions païennes ont fourni à leurs adeptes les moyens de parvenir au salut, c'est-à-dire à la félicité, à condition d'être épurées par la

⁴³ Dans la deuxième partie de la *Vérité de la religion chrétienne*.

⁴⁴ "De ce que dit Varron <la distinction des trois théologies, mythique, naturelle et civile> ainsi que des opinions de Platon, il est clair que la théologie des Païens s'est constituée à partir de trois sources: la droite raison, les fables mythiques des poètes et les inventions des prêtres." *DRG*, 227/382.

⁴⁵ Vossius, J. Scaliger, Grotius, Selden.

⁴⁶ "Personne, à mon avis, n'a réduit en ordre la masse brute et informe de la religion païenne ou ne l'a arrangée en un seul corps." Cherbury, *DRG*, 181/291.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 166/267.

⁴⁸ Cherbury établit une équivalence entre carême et ramadan, comparaison supprimée par Mersenne dans sa traduction.

philosophie et le Droit naturel. La science moderne peut jouer un rôle décisif dans l'abandon des croyances superstitieuses. Envisageant la question du destin, qu'il assimile à l'ordre du monde et fait dépendre entièrement de la bonté, de la sagesse et de la liberté de Dieu,⁴⁹ Herbert considère que le destin des astrologues est devenu insoutenable après Galilée: le monde a changé avec l'invention du télescope qui a permis de découvrir la nature gazeuse des planètes, leurs altérations, l'apparition d'astres nouveaux⁵⁰ et qui donc a ruiné la conception d'un monde supra-lunaire immuable et parfait.

Le salut des païens vertueux

On doit donc admettre que les "pieux romains"⁵¹ ont pu être sauvés sans le secours de la grâce ni rédemption externe, par des moyens purement naturels: la position du credo minimum, la subordination du culte externe au culte interne et la pratique de la vertu. Herbert va même plus loin puisqu'il affirme que la grâce leur fut donnée avec la conscience morale:

S'ils ont avancé avec les mêmes vertus que nous pratiquons présentement, sur la voie du bonheur éternel, pourquoi les Païens n'auraient-ils pas eu aussi la même conscience <morale> et même plus, pourquoi la grâce divine ne leur aurait-elle pas été accordée?⁵²

Or, les païens ont bien loué et cultivé les grandes vertus⁵³ et saint Pierre a honoré celle du centurion Corneille.⁵⁴ Donc, les religions païennes sont de vraies religions qui ont pu donner à leurs membres le moyen du salut; ce qui dévalorise ipso facto, comme non indispensable, le sacrifice rédempteur du Christ. On mesurera l'audace de cette thèse si on la compare à celle des auteurs contemporains, dont son ami Grotius, qui voient dans le paganisme une figure inchoative et impure de la vraie religion.

⁴⁹ *DRG*, 55/90.

⁵⁰ *DRG*, 56/90-1.

⁵¹ Cicéron, Caton, Sénèque.

⁵² *DRG*, 205/330.

⁵³ La piété, concorde, paix, chasteté, foi, espérance *DRG*, 187-95/301-14. On notera l'absence de la charité parmi les vertus que les païens ont particulièrement honorées jusqu'à aller leur consacrer des temples.

⁵⁴ *DRG*, 205/330. Actes, 10:1-43.

Enjeux de cette réduction

Quels sont donc les enjeux de cette réduction du paganisme *et* du christianisme à différents stades de développement, correspondant à une même structure, d'une religion naturelle qui est leur base commune? Ils concernent trois domaines: religieux, politique, philosophique.

Avec la reconnaissance d'une base et d'une structure communes à toutes les religions, les religions anciennes et exotiques sont revalorisées en même temps que chaque religion est soumise à un processus critique de purification. Comme le dit clairement un des derniers chapitres (XIV) du *DRG*, la religion païenne n'est ni absurde ni stupide. Tout ce qui, en elle, est grotesque vient des prêtres. On voit naître là⁵⁵ un anticléricalisme sur fond religieux. Les prêtres ne sont pas des imposteurs,⁵⁶ ce sont des profiteurs qui ont abusé de leur statut pour pervertir une religion initialement saine, quoiqu'inévitablement exprimée dans le langage des préjugés et de l'imagination. Ils ont inversé la hiérarchie naturelle de ses modes de fonctionnement en faisant passer l'accessoire, les rites ou les croyances secondaires, pour l'essentiel: les dogmes fondamentaux et la pratique de la morale. Ce sont eux—et non pas le peuple—qui ont figé une représentation multiforme du Dieu suprême en polythéisme. Mais le polythéisme n'est pas en soi radicalement mauvais; sa force, c'est sa faculté d'intégration de toute croyance ou tout rite dans la religion commune au peuple, donc sa forme non ecclésiale ni sectaire. Il faut le purifier sans rien perdre de sa tolérance des diverses formes d'expression religieuse. Cette purification se fera par la philosophie et le Droit et non pas par la révélation.⁵⁷

Du point de vue politique, le caractère inessentiel des différences entre religions ruine toute justification religieuse des poursuites contre des individus ou des peuples.⁵⁸ L'appareil ecclésiastique demeure, réduit à un rôle sociologique de fonctionnaires des rites liés aux grands moments de l'existence: entrée dans la communauté, mariage, mort.⁵⁹ Cherbury ne défend pas l'idée de "croyants sans Eglise" mais

⁵⁵ Un peu comme chez Erasme où l'opposition aux ordres monastiques qui s'arroge le monopole de la prédication remplace l'anticléricalisme cherburien.

⁵⁶ C'est là la différence avec le modèle libertin.

⁵⁷ Cherbury, *RL*, 139/175.

⁵⁸ Cherbury, *DRG* XVI, 218 sq./366 sq.

⁵⁹ Cf. J. Lagrée, *Le salut du laïc*, pp. 133–35.

celle de la parité du clerc et du laïc et la réduction de la fonction sacerdotale à une fonction sociale d'éducation, d'admonestation, d'encouragement à la vertu et de correction des vices. Les prêtres représentent la collectivité et font fonction de médiateurs publics dans l'organisation des cultes publics sans intervenir dans la relation privée du croyant à Dieu.

Cette revalorisation du paganisme poussée jusqu'à l'identité de toutes les religions et l'abandon de la nécessité de la révélation chrétienne, va de pair avec un naturalisme dont le caractère optimiste se fonde sur l'identification ultime du *Deus sive Natura*.⁶⁰ Le dieu suprême, unique ou hégémonique, qu'on appelle à juste titre *summus*, *optimus*, *maximus*, est identifié à la Nature par le biais de la providence divine,⁶¹ voire directement: "Il n'y a point d'homme de bon sens qui ne reconnaisse et vénère une puissance souveraine, qu'on l'appelle Dieu ou Nature."⁶² Ce naturalisme justifie une confiance totale dans les forces propres de la nature humaine pour conduire l'homme éduqué par la philosophie à sa perfection et à sa félicité.

La prise de position résolue en faveur d'une réhabilitation du paganisme conduit ainsi Herbert de Cherbury à défendre, avec les droits du laïc, la capacité d'autonomie et la responsabilité individuelle du sujet quelconque, le sujet de droit de l'âge moderne.

Malebranche

L'approche du paganisme par Malebranche est résolument hostile, sans récupération d'aucune sorte. Si Jésus-Christ a pu rendre divin l'ouvrage de Dieu et "faire de nous des dieux," c'est en tant qu'enfants adoptifs⁶³ et non par un processus de divinisation des héros. L'originalité de Malebranche consiste dans une démarche de double déduction/réfutation de la fausseté du paganisme: métaphysique par la critique de la notion naïve de cause et théologique par la révélation

⁶⁰ Cherbury, *De veritate* (1ère p. = édition latine de 1645, reprint G. Gawlick, Stuttgart: Frommann 1966; 2ème p. = trad. Mersenne de 1639, cité ensuite *DV*), 175/229.

⁶¹ *Natura heic est providentia divina universalis*. *DV* p. 0 (définitions initiales).

⁶² *DV*, 175/229. Cette identification paraît si scandaleuse que Mersenne la gomme systématiquement dans sa traduction anonyme et qu'il traduit: "soit qu'on l'appelle Dieu ou par un autre nom."

⁶³ Malebranche, *Traité de la nature et de la grâce* (*TNG*) I, i, a.1, t. II (Paris: Pléiade, 1979-1992), p. 10.

qui explique l'idolâtrie par le péché originel.⁶⁴ Depuis lors, l'esprit s'est oublié lui-même et les erreurs des sens ont été amplifiées par l'imagination.⁶⁵ Une détermination plus exacte de la notion de cause, liée aux progrès de la science mécanique et de la philosophie nouvelle, permettra de rejeter définitivement le paganisme.

Malebranche oppose, dans la *Recherche de la vérité*, deux types de philosophies: la philosophie reçue d'Adam c'est-à-dire de Dieu que l'on retrouve en consultant la lumière intérieure, identique au Verbe divin, Sagesse éternelle de Dieu, et la fausse philosophie "reçue du serpent."⁶⁶

La philosophie nouvelle, issue de Descartes et corrigée par l'occasionalisme, a ruiné l'hypothèse d'une action directe du corps sur l'esprit ou inversement, restauré la dignité de l'esprit et renversé le culte des créatures. Elle "ruine toutes les raisons des libertins par l'établissement du plus grand de ses principes <l'unité de la cause> qui s'accorde parfaitement avec le premier principe de la religion chrétienne."⁶⁷

La critique de la causalité présuppose le rejet de la nature des philosophes païens,⁶⁸ nature qualifiée de "pure chimère," "idole et fiction de l'esprit humain."⁶⁹ Alléguer la nature, le premier mobile, ou l'âme universelle, c'est toujours raisonner en païen.⁷⁰ L'identification par Sénèque de la nature et de Dieu, via la providence ou le destin,⁷¹ est particulièrement impie parce qu'elle confond le créateur, indépendant et autosuffisant, et la créature toujours dépendante. La nature convenablement conçue ne désigne que les lois générales instituées, donc créées, par Dieu.⁷²

⁶⁴ *Recherche de la vérité* (cité *RV*) VI, ii, 3; t. I, p. 652.

⁶⁵ XV éclaircissement à la *RV*; t. I, pp. 969-74.

⁶⁶ "Toutes ces petites divinités des païens et toutes ces causes particulières des philosophes ne sont que des chimères que le malin esprit tâche d'établir pour ruiner le culte du vrai Dieu, pour en occuper des esprits et des cœurs que le Créateur n'a faits que pour lui." *RV*, VI, ii, 3; t. I, p. 652.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 652 avec renvoi à Augustin: "Voici cette religion chrétienne: elle adore un seul Dieu et non plusieurs dieux parce qu'il n'y a qu'un Dieu qui rende l'âme heureuse." *Traité sur saint Jean*, XXIII, 5.

⁶⁸ Particulièrement Aristote et les stoïciens.

⁶⁹ *RV*, XV Eclairc. t. I, p. 987; *TNG* I, ii, 59, t. II p. 57.

⁷⁰ *RV*, XV Eclairc. t. I, p. 978.

⁷¹ Voir *Des bienfaits*, IV, 8.

⁷² "Bien loin de nier la Providence, je suppose au contraire, que c'est Dieu qui fait tout en toutes choses; que la nature des philosophes païens est une chimère; et qu'à proprement parler ce qu'on appelle *nature*, n'est rien autre chose que les lois générales que Dieu a établies pour construire ou conserver son ouvrage par des

Malebranche récuse aussi la solution scolastique, prétendument conciliatrice, du “concours”⁷³ qui veut que Dieu *et* la nature nous comblent de biens. Seul Dieu est actif, source de tout bien; seul il doit être aimé et craint.⁷⁴ La nature est créée; or le statut de créature est essentiellement un statut de dépendance⁷⁵ et de passivité. Seul l’Être éternel est indépendant et tout ce qui a une existence indépendante a une existence éternelle.⁷⁶ Cette conception de Dieu, métaphysiquement défini comme l’Être infiniment parfait donc tout puissant,⁷⁷ conditionne l’analyse occasionnaliste de la cause, puisque ce qui est véritablement cause est indépendant, donc éternel et divin.

“Il n’y a qu’une vraie cause parce qu’il n’y a qu’un vrai Dieu.”⁷⁸ La thèse occasionnaliste est présentée dans un chapitre intitulé “De l’erreur la plus dangereuse de la philosophie des Anciens.” Qu’est-ce que cette erreur? la multiplication des causes. Pourquoi “la plus dangereuse?” parce qu’elle fonde philosophiquement le polythéisme et l’idolâtrie. Qu’est-ce que la cause? une puissance d’agir, quelque chose de divin.⁷⁹

Toute vraie causation ou toute production de mouvement⁸⁰ est création. Dieu seul est donc cause véritable. Démontrer a priori l’impossibilité d’une causalité seconde autre qu’occasionnelle, c’est réfuter le paganisme. Or cette démonstration est possible après Descartes quand on a compris que corps et esprit sont deux natures qui n’ont rien de commun et qu’ils ne sauraient être de vraies causes.⁸¹ Malebranche a montré plus haut, sur l’exemple du choc de deux boules,⁸² que la succession constante de deux phénomènes ne suffit pas à établir entre eux un lien de causalité. Il faut désormais

voies très simples, par une action toujours uniforme, constante, parfaitement digne d’une sagesse infinie et d’une cause universelle.” *TNG*, I Eclairc. § 3; t. II, p. 138.

⁷³ *XV Eclairc.* t. I, p. 1003.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1008.

⁷⁵ *TNG*, II, ii, 53; t. II, pp. 101-2.

⁷⁶ *TNG*, I, i, a.4. t. II, p. 16.

⁷⁷ *TNG*, III Eclairc., §§ 1-5; t. II, p. 165.

⁷⁸ *RV*, VI, II, 3. t. I, p. 646.

⁷⁹ “Si l’on vient ensuite à considérer attentivement l’idée que l’on a de cause ou de puissance d’agir, on ne peut douter que cette idée ne représente quelque chose de divin. Car l’idée d’une puissance souveraine est l’idée de la souveraine divinité et l’idée d’une puissance subalterne est l’idée d’une divinité inférieure mais d’une véritable divinité, au moins selon la pensée des païens, supposé que ce soit l’idée d’une puissance ou d’une cause véritable.” *Ibid.*, p. 643.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 650.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 651

⁸² *RV*, III, II, 3; t. I, pp. 330-32.

prouver que seul Dieu peut être cause. Or il n'y a que trois sources possibles du mouvement: le corps, l'esprit, Dieu. En raison de sa passivité, le corps est incapable de se donner le moindre mouvement; il n'y a aucune relation intelligible entre un mouvement corporel et une volonté spirituelle en raison de la différence des deux natures; il est donc impossible pour l'esprit d'agir sur le corps et d'influer sur le cours des esprits animaux,⁸³ en revanche il y a en Dieu, et en lui seul, en raison de sa toute puissance, liaison nécessaire entre la volonté et son effet. Dieu seul, est donc cause réelle et efficace.

Si l'on considère ensuite l'esprit, il lui est impossible d'agir sur ses idées puisqu'il ne peut agir, c'est-à-dire avoir des volontés, que s'il a préalablement des idées;⁸⁴ le corps peut encore moins agir sur l'esprit et il faut donc réinterpréter l'union de l'âme et du corps en union à Dieu qui, à l'occasion des mouvements du corps ou des pensées et volontés de l'âme, produit dans l'âme et le corps les pensées ou les mouvements correspondants, en suivant toujours l'ordre général de la nature.

Admettre les causes secondes, y penser et les aimer, c'est honorer des divinités subalternes, c'est préférer le multiple à l'un, adopter l'attitude des Juifs dans le désert qui se plaignaient de la manne et regrettaient les oignons et les poireaux d'Egypte; c'est avoir "le cœur chrétien" et "le fond de l'esprit païen."⁸⁵ Si être cause c'est être Dieu, les petites divinités des païens et les causes particulières des philosophes ne sont que des chimères mais des chimères dangereuses parce qu'elles conduisent inévitablement à "justifier une religion semblable à celle des païens et approuver le dérèglement universel des mœurs."⁸⁶

Malebranche dérive ainsi le culte du soleil et des astres de l'attribution d'une efficace aux causes secondes que renforcent les illusions et préjugés venus des sens.⁸⁷ Si le soleil a presque partout été adoré

⁸³ XV Eclairc. t. I, p. 990.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 989.

⁸⁵ *RV*, VI, II, 3; t. I, 643.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 645.

⁸⁷ "Il est vrai que la raison n'enseigne pas qu'il faille adorer les oignons et les poireaux, par exemple, comme la souveraine divinité parce qu'ils ne peuvent nous rendre entièrement heureux lorsque nous les avons, ou entièrement malheureux quand nous n'en avons point. Aussi les païens ne leur ont-ils jamais rendu tant d'honneur qu'au grand Jupiter duquel toutes leurs divinités dépendaient, ou qu'au soleil que nos sens nous représentent comme la cause universelle qui donne la vie

c'est qu'il est une source universelle de biens, de chaleur et de vie; mais, à juger de la sorte, on finira par adorer tout ce qui comporte quelque utilité: "le soleil, la lune, le fleuve Nil et jusqu'aux plus vils des animaux."⁸⁸ Les hommes d'aujourd'hui sont "assez éclairés pour ne pas tomber dans les erreurs grossières des païens et des idolâtres" mais leur cœur étant "souvent disposé comme celui des païens,"⁸⁹ ils ont inventé une nouvelle forme d'idolâtrie, celle des trois faux biens de la tradition de la rhétorique morale. Après la réfutation métaphysique du paganisme il faut donc examiner les conséquences morales de la croyance en une efficace des causes secondes.

Conséquences morales

Par le péché originel l'homme a perdu le pouvoir de parfaite maîtrise sur le corps que possédait Adam⁹⁰ mais, en outre, sa raison a été affaiblie, ce qui l'a conduit à confondre vraies et fausses vertus.

Malebranche dénonce la fausseté des opinions des philosophes païens sur le souverain bien mais il n'insiste pas sur leurs contradictions; ces erreurs sont la conséquence du faux principe qui porte à confondre plaisir et bien et à croire que bien et mal sont dans le corps.⁹¹ Les deux principales écoles attaquées sont les épicuriens et les stoïciens.⁹² Les épicuriens sont présentés de manière caricaturale, comme ceux qui accordent trop aux sens et y situent la source des plaisirs.⁹³ Les stoïciens ont prétendu leur répondre en séparant les plaisirs qui sont dans le corps et les biens qui sont dans l'âme mais leur ignorance du péché originel les a jetés dans des déviations pires, un orgueil monstrueux qui leur fait croire que leur sage est indépendant de tout, et donc l'égal de Dieu.⁹⁴ A l'encontre du courant

et le mouvement à toutes choses; et que l'on ne peut s'empêcher de regarder comme une divinité si l'on suppose avec les philosophes païens qu'il renferme dans son être les causes véritables de tout ce qu'il semble produire, non seulement dans notre corps et dans notre esprit mais encore dans tous les êtres qui nous environnent." *Ibid.* Voir aussi *RV*, VI, II, 4. XV Eclairc.

⁸⁸ XV Eclairc. t. I, p. 1012.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Malebranche, *TNG* II, I, 27; t. II, pp. 86-7.

⁹¹ *RV*, I, XVII, t. I, 130.

⁹² *RV*, I, XVII, 3, intitulé "L'origine des erreurs des épicuriens et des stoïciens."

⁹³ "Ils se laissaient aller à toutes les passions desquelles ils n'appréhendaient pas de souffrir quelque incommodité par la suite." *RV*, I, XVII, 3, t. I, p. 131.

⁹⁴ *RV*, V, II, t. I, p. 493. Voir aussi *RV*, V, IV, p. 518: "Zénon et toute la phi-

néostoïcien particulièrement puissant en morale qui, de Juste Lipse à Du Vair, redit pour les temps modernes la leçon de patience du *De constantia sapientis*, Malebranche se montre fort critique envers Sénèque:⁹⁵ il reconnaît la force et la beauté de ses paroles mais non de ses raisons. Son sage est pompeux, magnifique, vain, imaginaire; la patience de Caton n'est qu'orgueil, fierté, mépris de ses ennemis, assimilés à des bêtes, jointe à une trop grande estime de soi; elle est contraire à la vraie patience du Christ lors de sa passion; Jésus, lui, souffre et pardonne à ses ennemis. Le stoïcisme est une forme mal perçue de folie, celle des hommes qui se prennent pour des dieux.⁹⁶ C'est donc une philosophie inconciliable avec le christianisme.

La prétendue sagesse du sage impassible relève donc de la folie de se croire des dieux à laquelle répond chez les chrétiens, la folie de la croix et la vertu d'humilité. Mais dans le droit fil de la critique du paganisme, il faut encore souligner la reprise du thème rhétorique classique de la dénonciation des trois faux biens: le plaisir sensuel, la richesse et l'honneur, que Malebranche interprète non pas comme erreur de visée mais comme idolâtrie.⁹⁷

Conséquences

A la double déduction du paganisme correspond une double voie pour en sortir: l'une, philosophique, par la philosophie nouvelle, les lois du mouvement et la distinction réelle de l'âme et du corps; l'autre, théologique: par la révélation du péché originel, de ses conséquences sur l'union de l'âme et du corps et sur l'union de la raison humaine à la Lumière éternelle. La raison et la religion nous montrent que Dieu seul est notre bien et la source de tous nos biens et de tous nos maux: il ne faut connaître, craindre et aimer que Dieu.

Au terme de cette analyse, il semble que le paganisme provoque

losophie païenne ne peut résoudre la difficulté proposée par les épicuriens et il faut avoir recours à une autre philosophie plus solide et plus éclairée."

⁹⁵ *RV*, II, III, 4 (De l'imagination de Sénèque); t. I, p. 263.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁹⁷ "Car n'est-ce pas une espèce d'idolâtrie que de faire un Dieu de son ventre ainsi que parle saint Paul? N'est-ce pas être idolâtre du Dieu des richesses que de travailler sans cesse pour acquérir du bien? Est-ce rendre à Dieu le culte qui lui est dû; est-ce l'adorer en esprit et en vérité que d'avoir le cœur tout plein de quelque beauté sensible, et l'esprit ébloui par l'éclat de quelque grande imagination?" *RV*, XV Eclairc. t. I, p. 1012.

chez Malebranche des effets ambivalents. Certes, c'est en premier lieu et massivement une religion de l'imagination, une conception infantile de Dieu et de la causalité. Mais en même temps, tout honni qu'il soit, il suscite chez lui un travail de la pensée à la suite duquel il est à la fois réfuté, intégré, dépassé. Une nouvelle conception de la puissance divine permet un redressement de l'erreur des Anciens, une révolution dans la pensée des corps qui intègre la nature profane dans l'efficace de la volonté divine et ruine le vitalisme naturaliste. Mais en même temps la théorie de la grâce intègre en elle certains éléments du paganisme: le "Tout est plein de Dieu (ou de dieux)" de la philosophie païenne devient "Tout est plein de Jésus-Christ"⁹⁸ puisque Jésus-Christ est cause occasionnelle en même temps que méritoire de la grâce.⁹⁹ En Jésus-Christ, la nature retrouve sa beauté et son éclat.¹⁰⁰ La critique des causes secondes vise à éviter que nous ne nous prenions pour des dieux tandis qu'inversement la théorie du corps mystique,¹⁰¹ terme et fin de la création, permet de donner une place à l'homme, membre de ce corps, au sein de la divinité.

Enjeux de cette querelle

Il serait difficile de dresser un tableau final exhaustif des enjeux et des effets de la querelle du paganisme au XVII^e siècle. Le christianisme a vaincu depuis longtemps le paganisme et si la querelle théologique entre Celse et Origène fournit encore des métaphores ou des injures,¹⁰² l'enjeu n'est plus proprement apologétique.¹⁰³ J'ai essayé de montrer que l'enjeu se déplace:

– d'une part vers la métaphysique où la querelle implique un réexamen de ce que signifie la toute puissance divine: c'est assujet-

⁹⁸ *TNG*, II, II, 58; t. II, p. 104.

⁹⁹ *TNG*, II, I, 9; t. II, p. 64.

¹⁰⁰ "L'Écriture sainte nous apprend que c'est Jésus-Christ qui doit faire toute la beauté, la sainteté, la grandeur et la magnificence de ce grand ouvrage. Car, si on le compare à une ville, c'est Jésus-Christ qui en fait tout l'éclat." *TNG*, I, II, 25; t. II, p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Jésus-Christ étant l'âme dont le corps est l'Eglise.

¹⁰² Par ex. pour Cherbury accusé d'être un Celse moderne.

¹⁰³ Même si la présentation du christianisme comme dépassement du paganisme est un des moments de l'apologétique rationaliste qui s'appuie sur la religion naturelle (Duplessis Mornay, Grotius, Abbadie).

tir Dieu au Styx et aux destinées que de nier qu'il puisse être créateur des vérités éternelles. Cette toute puissance divine admet-elle une multiplicité de puissances efficaces? Ce qui pose la question du monisme ou de la pluralité des substances ainsi que de l'intégration de la causalité humaine dans l'action de Dieu. On retrouvera cette question chez Spinoza—avec l'articulation de la causalité immanente de la substance et de la causalité transitive des modes—et chez Leibniz, avec la conciliation de la liberté humaine et de l'harmonie préétablie par le biais de la spontanéité de la monade et de la notion complète de l'individu.

— D'autre part vers la politique où le paganisme symbolise l'intégration d'une multiplicité de points de vue sur la divinité et donc le droit de penser librement et d'exprimer publiquement et pacifiquement ses idées en matière de religion: on le voyait déjà dans les dialogues iréniques de Castellion, Coornhert ou Bodin sur la pluralité des religions formant par leur concert une harmonie agréable à Dieu; on le retrouvera chez Voltaire et les penseurs des Lumières. La querelle du paganisme n'est pas d'abord une querelle religieuse puisque le temps de la religion païenne est passé; c'est une querelle métaphysique, politique et idéologique à la fois.

JOSÉ R. MAIA NETO

I became acquainted with Dick Popkin's work when I was writing my Master's Thesis in Brazil on the scepticism exhibited in the novels of the Brazilian writer Machado de Assis.¹ Because I wanted to pursue my work on the modern history of scepticism I decided to go to the United States to study under the direction of Dick Popkin in the Graduate Program of Philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis. But, by the time I moved to Saint Louis Popkin had already moved to Los Angeles. Nevertheless, his departure did not preclude me from working with him because, during the period I stayed in Saint Louis, he made arrangements to enable me to present papers at most of the conferences which he either organized or to which he was invited all over the U.S. and Europe. I was—and still am—so fortunate to meet a scholar who is so helpful to his students. The only other scholar whom I ever met, or heard about, who helps his students as much as Dick does is Richard Watson. Red Watson was a former student of Dick Popkin's and was the Co-Director of my Doctoral Dissertation at Washington University. One of the many conferences which Dick organized and invited me to participate in was held in Riverside, California, 1991.² In Riverside, Popkin put together North, Central, and South American scholars who were working on scepticism. Dick's influence upon the history of philosophy in Latin America as well as his tremendous talent to create and mobilize people to pursue fruitful research programs then became quite clear. Some of us scholars from widely scattered parts of Latin America began to work seriously in collaboration only after Popkin, whom we knew separately, put us together at this conference in Riverside. In addition to books and ideas, he connects people, intra-continentially as well as inter-continentially.

¹ My Master's Thesis has been revised, translated into English, and published as *Machado de Assis, The Brazilian Pyrrhonian* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1994).

² "Scepticism in the History of Philosophy: A Pan-American Dialogue," sponsored by the University of California Humanities Research Institute, the University of California, Riverside, Center for Ideas and Society, and the Foundation for Research in Intellectual History, Riverside, February 15, 1991.

BAYLE'S ACADEMIC SCEPTICISM

José R. Maia Neto

Turning now to the subject of my essay I shall return to the day I first met Popkin in Saint Louis. We had to decide the subject of my dissertation. I told him that I would like to focus on the scepticism exhibited in some of Pascal's and Kierkegaard's works. Popkin found the choice of subject and authors most interesting and suggested that I also included Pierre Bayle. As soon as I had a chance to look at the complexity of Bayle's work I carefully and quietly neglected his suggestion. Since I defended my dissertation I have concentrated my research on the models of scepticism elaborated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Up to now I have avoided facing Bayle's case head on although he was always on the back of my mind when I outlined models of scepticism in the period. All the models, however, appeared unable to account for some—I do not say all—of the main features of Bayle's view of scepticism.

The first of these models—the most influential during the seventeenth century at least up to the appearance of Descartes—is Montaigne's sceptical fideism. According to this model, suspension of judgment is the natural end of philosophical inquiry. The sceptical frame of mind is considered the best natural possible one to human beings. Freedom of judgment is preserved because there is no commitment to beliefs. This same lack of commitment secures tranquility in scientific, practical and religious matters (nothing is expected or pursued with eagerness for no value belief is held). Moreover, because reason and the senses, that is, human natural faculties, are not able to produce certain knowledge, no merely human knowledge is possible and therefore pagan heretic doctrines such as Stoicism do not represent serious alternatives to divine inspired supernatural knowledge (faith). Montaigne undeniably influenced Bayle although there is not an article in the *Dictionary* on the author of the *Essais*. There are, however, articles on Pierre Charron and François de La Mothe Le Vayer who conceived scepticism along lines similar to Montaigne's and attribute to the sceptical position a similar propaedeutic role to acceptance of the Christian faith. Because both articles are sympa-

thetic to Montaigne's two sceptical disciples, and given the fideism exhibited in the article "Pyrrho" (among many others) and in the clarification on skepticism in the *Dictionary*, the first attempt to locate Bayle in the sceptical models of the seventeenth century should be to relate him to the sceptical fideism of Montaigne, Charron, and La Mothe Le Vayer.

There are, however, a few points that differentiate Bayle from the sceptical fideists—some few may even set them in opposition. Popkin notes that whereas Montaigne's and his disciples' scepticism is basically grounded on Aenesidemus' ten modes—Pyrrhonian scepticism with respect to the senses and ethics—Bayle's scepticism is more radical to the extent that it seems to strike reason itself: it is the notion of rational evidence that is challenged in remark B of "Pyrrho."³ Craig Brush finds affinities in Montaigne's and Bayle's ethical views but also differences: Montaigne believes—and Bayle doubts—that reason can positively affect human conduct.⁴ Harry Bracken goes further and claims that Bayle's position is radically distinct from sceptical fideism. Sceptical fideists claim scepticism is propaedeutic to faith, serving as a kind of *preambulo fidei*. According to Thomas Aquinas, philosophy is such *preambulo* in so far as it proves the existence of God. According to Montaigne, Charron, and La Mothe Le Vayer, the way to faith is the recognition that rational knowledge is impossible. Bracken argues that a Calvinist such as Bayle could never propose any kind of *preambulo fidei*. Faith concerns only the believer and God. The Calvinist rule of faith is direct examination of scripture which excludes the assistance of any authority whatsoever, even Pyrrhonian.⁵ Indeed, the philosophical, religious and social context of Bayle is quite distinct from the Catholic, erudite, and regal context of La Mothe Le Vayer. Most scholars who found fundamental affinities between Bayle and La Mothe Le Vayer proposed their interpretations before the publication of Elizabeth Labrousse's work on Bayle in 1963–4. Up to that point, most scholars followed Voltaire's—

³ Richard H. Popkin, "Pierre Bayle's Place in 17th Century Scepticism," in P. Dibon, ed., *Pierre Bayle, le philosophe de Rotterdam* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1959), pp. 1–19.

⁴ Craig Brush, *Montaigne and Bayle: Variations on the Theme of Skepticism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 330.

⁵ Harry M. Bracken, "Bayle's Attack on Natural Theology: the Case of Christian Pyrrhonism," in Richard H. Popkin and Arjo Vanderjagt, eds., *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

and that of the Enlightenment philosophe's—view of Bayle as an atheist. René Pintard concludes his book *Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIII^{ème} siècle* (1943) by suggesting that Bayle is the link between La Mothe Le Vayer's free thought and the deism and atheism of the eighteenth century. La Mothe Le Vayer expands on Aenesidemus' tenth mode (based on the diversity of customs, beliefs, and lifestyles), critically examining religion. His criticism was quickly absorbed by libertines who extended it also to Judeo-Christianity. Bayle's criticism of the Old Testament is different from the libertine critique. The point of his criticism is not to show the relative, historical, and man-made character of the Christian religion but to point out the immorality present in the Old Testament. Despite this criticism, since Labrousse's work, most scholars do not doubt the sincerity of Bayle's faith which, although heterodox, seems to have been genuinely Calvinist.⁶ Finally, Bayle's sympathy towards Charron and La Mothe Le Vayer does not indicate his agreement with the views held by them but shows rather his support for the sincerity of their faith. Bayle had little patience with apologists who charged with atheism those thinkers that seemed to deviate a bit from orthodoxy.⁷

A basic difference between Montaigne's, Charron's, and La Mothe Le Vayer's sceptical fideism and Bayle's view of scepticism is that the former ground scepticism on human nature. Human faculties are naturally limited, incapable of certain knowledge. This position is consistent with a humanist view of humankind developed by late scholastic Jesuits. Against the Reformers, these Jesuits (Molina in particular) hold that original sin did not cause any corruption of human nature. Human beings remain capable of a limited freedom and knowledge proportional to their limited original nature. Bayle exhibits a theological pessimism, a Calvinist belief in human corruption, which is quite evident in his obsession with the problem of evil, a problem not discussed by Montaigne and his disciples. Two of the main models of scepticism in the seventeenth century can be labeled the nat-

⁶ Elizabeth Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963–4), 2:600–10.

⁷ Bayle expressed reservations with respect to La Mothe Le Vayer. Jossua cites a letter from Bayle to his brother in which he says of La Mothe Le Vayer and Gabriel Naudé that "because they act excessively as esprits forts, they frequently advance doctrines that have dangerous consequences." J.-P. Jossua, "Doute sceptique et doute méthodique chez Pierre Bayle," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 61 (1977), p. 234.

ural and the acquired models. The first is held by Montaigne and disciples: scepticism is the philosophical position commensurable to human limited nature. According to the acquired model, scepticism is an aspect of human misery in the fallen state, namely, the epistemological consequence of original sin. I have traced the origins of this model to the Jansenist movement, finding in Pascal its most complete elaboration. I have argued that Pascal's view of scepticism is a reaction to the humanist and naturalist view of scepticism held by Montaigne, Charron, and La Mothe Le Vayer.⁸

Given that Bayle's scepticism is not of the natural type, because of his Calvinism, would it not be Christianized like Pascal's, for whom scepticism does not derive from human nature as it left the hands of God but as having been acquired when man fell from the state of creation to that of sin?

Pascal is quite often cited by Bayle. Bayle alludes to Pascal's experiences concerning the void, praises Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, is impressed by Pascal's genius and piety,⁹ and, above all, refers to Pascal's position on the relationship between reason and faith when he wants to explain or justify his own position on this issue. The following is an instance in which Bayle seems to transcribe Pascal's text. Bayle's passage is located in remark C of the article "Pyrrho" of the *Dictionary*. Both in this remark and in Pascal's fragment 131 (Lafuma edition of the *Pensées*), doubt leads to a psychologically unbearable paradox in which scepticism is neither absolutely true nor absolutely false. Pascal then asks: "What then is man to do in this state of affairs? Is he to doubt everything? . . . Is he to doubt whether he is doubting? . . . What sort of freak then is man! How novel, how monstrous, how chaotic!"¹⁰ Now compare it with Bayle: "one must therefore doubt whether he ought to doubt. What chaos! What torment for the mind!"¹¹ Both Pascal and Bayle hold that the solution to this problem consists in reason's submission to Scripture. I cite Pascal:

⁸ José R. Maia Neto, *The Christianization of Skepticism: Skepticism and Faith in Pascal, Kierkegaard and Shestov* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), pp. 1–64.

⁹ Bayle cites episodes of Pascal's biography written by his sister Mme. Pèrier which seem inconsistent with his theory of the discontinuity between religious belief and moral practice.

¹⁰ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Louis de Lafuma, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 64.

¹¹ Pierre Bayle, *The Dictionary Historical and Critical*, 5 vols. (New York and London: Garland, 1984; reprint. of the 1734–1738 English edition), 4:656.

"Who will unravel such a tangle? . . . Nature confounds the sceptics . . . and reason confounds the dogmatists. . . . Know then, proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself. . . . Learn that man infinitely transcends man, hear from your master your true condition, which is unknown to you. Listen to God."¹² Bayle seems to present the same solution, although not expressed in the same dramatic way. He says that the psychological paradox resulting from scepticism "is a great step towards the Christian religion, which requires for us that we should expect from God the knowledge of what we are to believe and do, and that we should captivate our understanding to the obedience of faith."¹³

The positions of Pascal and Bayle on this sceptical paradox are, however, quite distinct. According to Bayle, the psychological difficulty derives from a paradox internal to scepticism. If the modes that lead to doubt are beyond reproach, scepticism is indubitable, so there is certainty and scepticism fails. But this does not happen because the modes themselves are doubtful. According to Pascal the difficulty derives from the fact that the sceptical arguments are sound but at least some beliefs are practically unavoidable. Like Pascal, Bayle also cites habit and grace as forces that keep one from suspending judgment but for Pascal such forces indicate the partial veracity of dogmatism (understood as adoption of beliefs), which he interprets as a reminiscent trace of the state of innocence or creation in the fallen state. This partial truth of dogmatism is absent from Bayle's thought. Bayle just says that given the fact that scepticism leads to an unbearable uncertainty we must submit to scripture. Pascal *justifies* such submission with the argument that scripture explains the psychological problem generated by scepticism. As soon as Pascal exhorts the reader to listen to God he cites the doctrine of the Fall in the book of Genesis that, according to him, explains the partial and relative truth of dogmatism (which is fully true in the state of innocence and partially true in the state of sin through the moral feelings and axioms felt by human beings) and scepticism (resulting from original sin and prevailing in the state of corruption). Bayle's position on the relationship between reason and faith is not Pascal's. The submission advocated by Pascal is not blind. The humiliated reason in Pascal is a metaphysical *a priori* reason for which Christianity and its mys-

¹² Pascal, *Pensées*, Lafuma No. 131, pp. 64–65.

¹³ Bayle, *Dictionary*, art. "Pyrrho", remark B, 4:656.

teries are untenable. Bayle observes that, in his descriptions of this humiliated reason, Pascal attempts to make libertines "sensible of the weakness of reason, and taught to mistrust it."¹⁴ But there is another conception of reason that is not weak in Pascal: an empirical or *a posteriori* reason that verifies facts and evaluates hypotheses that purport to explain these facts.¹⁵ This reason shows that the doctrine of the Fall is the hypothesis that best explains the human epistemic condition. By contrast, Bayle says that a Christian must submit both *a priori* and *a posteriori* reason. Bayle, unlike Pascal, argues in the articles on the "Manicheans" that *a posteriori* reason verifies the *inconsistency* of Christianity with the facts of human life. According to Bayle, a Christian must not try to make religion reasonable nor use it to solve philosophical problems. From Pascal's perspective, Bayle falls into the two contrary extremes denounced in Lafuma's fragment 183: "to exclude reason, to admit nothing but reason."¹⁶ Reason runs untrammelled in philosophy (although with corrosive results) and is totally excluded from religion.

In order to indicate the difficulty in relating Bayle's view of scepticism to the acquired model, in what follows I exam Bayle's discussion of the problem of the epistemological consequences of original sin. In one of his earlier works, the *Pensées diverses sur la comète* (1682), Bayle alludes to Pascal's "proof from the doctrine":

... ce seroit une chose infinie, que de parcourir toutes les bizarreries de l'homme, qui font voir que c'est non seulement le plus sot de tous les animaux, ... mais aussi un monstre plus monstrueux que les Centaures et que la Chymere de la Fable; ce qui, au dire de Mr. Pascal, est une forte preuve de la verité qui nous est recitée dans le livre de la Genese, touchant la chute du premier homme. Il est certain, que c'est là qu'il faut chercher le dernier dénouement de toutes les contradictions qui se voyent dans nôtre espèce. Mais cela n'empêche pas, que le principe que j'ai posé, ne serve à débrouiller un peu ce cahos.¹⁷

The principle is Bayle's view of the discontinuity between religious beliefs and ethics: religious belief is not relevant in the ethical realm. Bayle attacks the Catholic argument according to which the forced

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Cf. Jeanne Russier, *La Foi selon Pascal*, 2 vols. (Paris: PUF, 1949), 2:334.

¹⁶ Pascal, *Pensées*, p. 85.

¹⁷ Pierre Bayle, *Pensées diverses sur la comète*, 2 vols., trans. Pierre Rétat (Paris: Nizet, 1984), 2:117–18.

conversion of the French Calvinists is justifiable because of the necessity of making them good citizens. Bayle argues that his thesis of the discontinuity between belief and action is consistent with the Christian doctrine of the Fall: the discontinuity would be one of the consequences of original sin. In his *Continuation des pensées diverses sur la comète*, Bayle says that “les Chrétiens, & sur-tout les Protestants, sont plus obligez que les autres . . . tirez cette dernière conclusion, eux qui savent que le péché originel a corrompu la nature humaine, & qu’il l’infecte de telle sorte, qu’il n’y reste rien d’entier. Les ténèbres obscurcissent l’entendement, la malice déprave la volonté.”¹⁸ Bayle presents the model of acquired scepticism in *Continuation des pensées diverses* as a weapon against the theory of universal consent. Even if there were such consent one could not rule out the possibility of an universal deceit given the corruption caused by original sin.

In a later work, however, the *Supplément du Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de J.C.: “contrain-les d’entrer”*, Bayle holds the opposite position when he confesses he cannot understand “comment presque tous les Chrétiens se sont laissez entraîner cette imagination, qu’il n’y a que le péché qui soit la cause de notre ignorance. Car pour peu que l’on réfléchisse sur la manière dont notre âme est unie à notre corps, on se pourra convaincre qu’il en naît une espèce de nécessité, qu’elle soit très-bornée & fautive dans ses connoissances.”¹⁹ Bayle assumes the Malebranchian doctrine of the non-epistemic nature of sense perception, which depends on the mind-body union. Bayle then applies Malebranche’s doctrine to the issue under examination: “je veux croire que si Adam eût persévéré, dans son innocence, la chose iroit mieux; mais néanmoins l’homme auroit été fort borné dans ses lumières, à cause de l’union de son esprit avec une machine portative, & à cause de la faiblesse où avroit été la Raison pendant les premières années de la vie.”²⁰ Because Bayle defends, in the *Commentaire philosophique*, an intentional ethics and the rights of putative sinners who sin in good faith, he attacks those who reduce error to the moral depravity caused by original sin. To attribute sin to the natural laws that rule the interaction of mind and body is a way to justify toleration towards those who err in good faith.

Bayle returns to the position that original sin brought sceptical con-

¹⁸ Pierre Bayle, *Oeuvres diverses*, 4 vols. (La Haye, 1727–1731), 3:118–119.

¹⁹ Bayle, *Oeuvres diverses*, 2:515.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

sequences in his last work, *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial* (1704–1706). Against Willian King's theodicy, in which King claims that error and ignorance are natural in created beings, Bayle replies that "ce qu'il y a de certain est, que l'erreur & l'ignorance soient compatibles avec tout être créé; mais il ne s'ensuit pas qu'elles doivent actuellement convenir à la créature. . . . La plûpart des Théologiens croient qu'Adam ne fût crée si docte, que quoi que sa science ne fût point infinie, ce seroit une absurdité manifeste que de soutenir qu'il étoit dans l'erreur & dans l'ignorance."²¹

Bayle's shifts on the question of the relations between scepticism and original sin show, first, that it is not easy to establish a connection between Bayle's scepticism and his theological pessimism; second, that except in the case of some ethical views such as religious tolerance, virtue of the atheists, and the right of the erring conscience, it is not easy to attribute positive views to Bayle. Bayle's argumentation often is *ad hominem* and *ad hoc*. Bayle argues now p, now not-p, according to the particular doctrine he is attacking. Adopting neither the natural nor the acquired model of scepticism, but arguing some times one, some times the other, Bayle appears as the early modern sceptic whose scepticism is closest to that of the ancient sceptics. Indeed, the ancient sceptics do not attempt to provide a foundation or origin to scepticism. Such attempts are exhibited by sceptically inclined Christians interested in articulating their scepticism to Christianity.

If Bayle's view of scepticism does not fit neither the natural nor the acquired model, how can it be characterized? I think part of the answer lies in Bayle's historical method and part in the Academic kind of scepticism held by his contemporary Simon Foucher. I suggest that the key to Bayle's view of scepticism is not to be found in his article on "Pyrrho" but in remark G of the article "Chrysippus." Bayle says that Chrysippus—a major Stoic adversary of the Academic sceptics—and all other dogmatists are not philosophers fully committed to intellectual integrity in that their philosophizing is prejudiced by their commitment to doctrines. Bayle then distinguishes two kinds of philosophers: *avocats* and *rapporteurs*. "Antiquity had two sort of Philosophers; some were like the Advocates, and others like those who report a Cause. The former, in proving their Opinions,

²¹ Bayle, *Oeuvres diverses*, 3:683.

hid the weak side of their Cause, and the strong of their Adversaries, as much as they could. The latter, to wit, the Sceptics or Academics, represented the strong and the weak Arguments of the two opposite Parties faithfully, and without any Partiality.”²² Pointing out that Christians, as Christians, cannot be merely *rapporteurs*, Bayle tells a theologian who charged him with defending heretical views that as a historian, and not as a Christian—for the views criticized by the theologian are stated in *The Dictionary Historical and Critical*—he “may, and ought, faithfully to represent the most specious things, that the worst Sects can alledge in their own vindication, or against Orthodoxy.”²³ In reply to the charge of Pyrrhonism raised by Pierre Jurieu, Bayle responds that:

je me reconnais à ce qu’il dit de ma manière de philosopher et j’avoue qu’excepté les vérités de religion, je ne regarde les autres disputes que comme un jeu d’esprit où il m’est indifférent qu’on prouve le pour ou le contre. Si ceux avec qui j’ai à vivre s’accommodent mieux du péripatétisme que du gassendisme ou du cartésianisme, je les y laisse tranquillement, je n’en suis pas moins leur ami et leur serviteur, je ne trouve nullement mauvais qu’on me contredise, et dès qu’une plus grande probabilité se présente, je me range là sans peine ni honte. C’a été de tout le temps l’esprit des philosophes académiciens.²⁴

Bayle says outright that his way of philosophizing is Academic. He holds only to the Academic commitment to intellectual integrity, that is, he is not committed to any doctrine. He refers to Academic probabilism which has nothing to do with modern mathematical probabilism but derives from Cicero’s translation of *pythanon* as *probabili*. The Greek term refers to the non-committal kind of assent given by the Academics to the appearances or views that strike them as persuasive. This kind of assent affords indifference because the appearance or view considered by the sceptic is not assumed as true. There are also other reasons for relating Bayle’s scepticism to Academic scepticism. The first, and I think the main one, is that Simon Foucher had just rehabilitated this school in a number of books on the inquiry after truth. Foucher opposes the dismissal, by contemporary Cartesians (especially Malebranche), of the sceptical element in Cartesian philosophy, namely, methodical doubt and the supreme commitment to

²² Bayle, *Dictionary*, 2:487.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Bayle, *Oeuvres diverses*, 2:676.

intellectual integrity.²⁵ It was easier to rehabilitate the Academics than the Pyrrhonians not only because by the end of the seventeenth century Pyrrhonism is closely associated with atheism but also because the Academics were treated with some respect by Church Fathers such as Lactantius and Augustine. Of course, in rehabilitating Academic scepticism, both Foucher and Bayle incorporate a good deal of Sextus' Pyrrhonism.

Foucher's influence on Bayle is quite remarkable. In remark B of "Pyrrho," Bayle says one cannot distinguish between primary and secondary qualities in the framework of modern philosophy. This is a premise for his main argument in the remark that the new science rather than refuting in fact fortifies ancient scepticism. If color, taste and sound are not properties of external bodies but modifications of the mind, the same must hold for size, quantity and movement since they also have a sensory origin. The result is a veil of ideas that make direct knowledge of external bodies impossible. Bayle credits Foucher for this argument and as somebody who perceived the sceptical—in Foucher, Academic—nature of the new science. There are still other evidences that Bayle's view of scepticism is inspired in Foucher's Academic scepticism. The end of Pyrrhonism is *ataraxia*, the tranquility of the soul. The Academics do not claim to pursue such an end, which is not mentioned by Bayle, even when describing Pyrrhonism itself. By contrast, intellectual integrity, a commitment emphasized by Cicero and Foucher as central in Academic scepticism (but not so central in Pyrrhonian scepticism for it is subordinated to the end of tranquillity) is often cited by Bayle, for instance in the passage on Chrysippus and the dogmatists cited above.

The passages that indicate Bayle's Academic scepticism also indicate another feature of his view of scepticism, which is absent from Foucher's model although it is not incompatible with it. This feature is Bayle's understanding of the sceptic as a historian. Bayle wrote a "Dissertation Concerning the Project of a Critical Dictionary," in which he stated the aim (to point out errors in previous historical works) and method of the Dictionary: "Most commonly I shall not be the discover of their faults but only the relater [*rapporteur*] of what others have said."²⁶ Bayle uses the same term "rapporteur" to

²⁵ José R. Maia Neto, "Academic Skepticism in Early Modern Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58:2 (1997), pp. 199–220.

²⁶ Bayle, *Dictionary*, 5:790.

characterize the philosophical method of the Academic sceptics (which he claims to follow) and his own method as a historian. Elizabeth Labrousse says that Bayle applies Descartes' method to the historical field, although in Bayle the Cartesian method is "réduite à la première règle, coupée de ses prolongements métaphysiques."²⁷ This is entirely consistent with Foucher's claim that Descartes is Academic as far as the first rule of his method is concerned. "The first was never to accept anything as true if I did not have evident knowledge of its truth: that is, carefully to avoid precipitate conclusions and preconceptions."²⁸ This rule is emphasized by Foucher in opposition to its abandonment by the major Cartesians and is crucial in Foucher's effort to recover the sceptical side of Cartesianism, neglected by Descartes's disciples who developed the doctrinal aspects of Cartesian philosophy.

The interpretation of Bayle's scepticism as Academic must deal with two contrary difficulties. The first is that Bayle rejects the notion of evidence as a criterion of truth in remark B of "Pyrrho." Bayle's academicism is not as broad as Foucher's. Bayle's commitment to intellectual integrity is supreme in his examination of historical reports and philosophical doctrines but disintegrates in face of the non-rational truths of Christian doctrines. (According to Foucher such doctrines are above, not against, reason). The second difficulty is Labrousse's claim that, although Bayle rejects Descartes' metaphysics, he does expect to establish, with a rigorous method, truth in the historical field as Descartes attempted to establish it in the realm of natural philosophy. Can such pretension be consistent with scepticism? First, Whelan and Jossua indicate that, according to Bayle, there are subjective obstacles (preconceptions, passions, etc.) that preclude the historian from being fully objective and impartial.²⁹ According to Whelan, part of the difficulty derives from Bayle's Calvinist anthropological pessimism. Historical objectivity is therefore only a regulative ideal to be pursued by the historian.³⁰ Second, in his

²⁷ Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle*, 2:57.

²⁸ René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings*, 2 vols., trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Donald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:120.

²⁹ Jossua, "Doute Sceptique," pp. 381–9, and Ruth Whelan, *The Anatomy of Superstition: A Study of the Historical Theory and Practice of Pierre Bayle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institution, 1989).

³⁰ Bayle is quite aware of the problem of "historical pyrrhonism." He shows the

"Dissertation," Bayle defends history against the Cartesians, claiming that, unlike natural philosophy, history is immune from scepticism. Assuming that history here means intellectual history, for the historiography in the *Dictionary* is above all that of ideas, Bayle's argument is that in historical accounts of ideas there is no question of scepticism for there is no correspondence between ideas and external reality. When Foucher (and Bayle following Foucher) claims that modern philosophy fortifies Academic scepticism he has in mind the sceptical problem of the way of ideas, which is characteristic of modern philosophy. Foucher says that scepticism appears in the problem of establishing a certified connection between ideas and the external material world *and not in respect to the ideas themselves*. For example, there is no problem with mathematics provided only it is not regarded as the essence of the external material world.³¹ According to Bayle, in the case of history the immunity from scepticism would be granted by the very nature of historical knowledge. There can be no sceptical problem in the critical history of ideas to the extent that this historical-critical discourse is precisely the sceptical discourse. In other words, I think that for Bayle the sceptic must be a historian. I find this view most interesting and take it as another indication that Bayle's view of scepticism is the most similar to ancient scepticism in the period. The ancient sceptics, both Pyrrhonian and Academic, do not have doctrines of their own. Of course they deal with doctrines when they exam philosophical issues but they argue *ad hominem* when dealing with them. If they "hold" a particular position, it is only provisionally for the sake of refuting some doctrine. They are, therefore, not doctrinaire philosophers but critical historians.³²

conflict of different historical accounts and recognizes that a historian will never have the exemption required for producing an impartial account of the historical facts, for besides being an historian he also is a Christian, Protestant, and so on. This kind of historical pyrrhonism is different from the scepticism that I am discussing in this essay.

³¹ See José R. Maia Neto, "Academic Skepticism in Early Modern Philosophy."

³² Sextus says that the sceptics do not "positively affirm that the fact is exactly as [they] state it, but [they] simply record each fact, like a chronicler, pp. 211–215, as it appears to [the sceptics] at the moment." Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, trans. G. Bury (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 1:4. It is true that this passage refers first of all to the epistemic status of the sceptic's statement of the outlines of his own school. But I see no reason why it cannot also apply to the sceptic's examination of dogmatic views, in particular considering that such examination represents a crucial part of the sceptic's discourse.

* * *

I said above that Popkin wanted me to include a chapter on Bayle's scepticism in my dissertation. I want to pay this debt by offering him this essay. Bayle is one of the many major and minor early modern thinkers whose views Popkin contributed so much to bringing to light. Bayle is one of the authors studied by Popkin whom he most admires and probably is the one whose views and practice are most similar to his own.³³ Popkin's work and attitude resemble Bayle's on at least three points. First his historical erudition. Popkin has a scholarly broad view of the early modern period; a unique comprehensive view of the connections between its many facets (religious, philosophical, scientific, and historical). This broad perspective in intellectual history was brilliantly exhibited by Bayle and has becoming increasingly rare among historians of philosophy. Second, Popkin's scepticism—Popkin considers himself a sceptic but he is not like some contemporary epistemologists who paradoxically attempt to prove the truth of scepticism by providing sophisticated arguments to the effect that knowledge is untenable. These are *avocats*. Popkin and Bayle are *rapporteurs*. Popkin's scepticism is exhibited in his historical work, in particular in the way he shows the raise and fall of dogmatisms, the irresolvable succession and conflict of philosophies throughout history. Finally, both Bayle's and Popkin's historical work are intimately related to their personal moral and religious views. Although their religion is not the same,³⁴ the scholarly work of both is deeply committed to the same humanistic values such as tolerance and freedom.³⁵

³³ "Like one of my heroes, Pierre Bayle, I feel the need to present each dogmatic view in the most intelligible or credible form before I level a sceptical attack on it." Richard H. Popkin, "Intellectual Autobiography: Warts and All," in Richard A. Watson and James E. Force, eds., *The Sceptical Mode in Modern Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Richard H. Popkin* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), p. 147.

³⁴ Although Popkin has considered the possibility of Bayle being a "Judaizing Christian, or a genuine Judeo-Christian, or even a secret Jew?" Richard H. Popkin, "Introduction," in *Pierre Bayle. Historical and Critical Dictionary*, trans. Richard H. Popkin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), p. xxvi.

³⁵ I thank Thomas Lennon, Telma Birchall and Plínio Smith for helpful suggestions and criticisms. I thank CNPq, Brasília, Brazil for financial support.

G. A. J. ROGERS

Conferring with Dick Popkin

I first met Dick Popkin at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, at the University of California, Los Angeles, in September, 1981, when I was lucky enough to have an Ahmanson Fellowship and he was the Clark Professor. Richard Kroll was also at the Clark and Robert Westman was a frequent visitor. The routine of the day became fairly predictable. After settling down in our respective carrels to write or read, at a certain point we mutually agreed to migrate to the lounge to consume coffee and large quantities of cake. Whilst we did so Dick (or another, but it was usually Dick) would fly one or another of his current kites, whether to do with the antics of the Reagan administration, the latest example of Messianic or Millenarian commitments recounted in the Los Angeles Times, the significance of a recently seen Newton theological manuscript and its place in his esoteric thought, or news of a newly discovered piece of evidence about the sceptical leanings of Savonarola. A noticeable feature of those precious six months was the way in which the call to coffee became earlier and earlier and the discussion ran into the time for lunch break and sandwiches: every day a seminar, or even three. Since then I have met Dick on innumerable occasions and at many conferences. One particular memory relates to a Paris meeting on Gassendi and his influence. His health was not good on that trip and the restaurant was crowded and full of smoke. Dick's breathing grew worse, his colour changed, and it was clear that we would have to leave our meal in mid-course. Outside in the comparatively clear air of the street, and leaning against the wall, he began slowly to recover. But throughout the whole time—about an hour I would guess—Dick insisted on telling me about his latest discovery—a notebook in the Bibliothèque Nationale throwing important new light on the transmission of scepticism which no-one else had even thought to open. Worries about his health were entirely secondary to the telling of the exciting story. Meanwhile I was too concerned about

him scarcely to absorb the gem that was being passed to me. Slowly Dick was able to recover enough to make it back to his hotel. But the incident seemed totally eclipsed in his own mind by the recollection of the recovery of yet another buried treasure which would help him to tell the story of the profound change he was the first to discern in the history of modern thought.

POPKIN, SCEPTICISM, AND THE HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

G. A. J. Rogers

Richard Popkin's *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*¹ has added a whole dimension to the way the modern world is understood, both as to its origins and its nature. It has also spawned an academic industry. Before its publication the number of works on classical scepticism alone was comparatively small. Since Popkin's book and the subsequent realization of the influence of those classical sceptical texts the work on classical sources has increased enormously.² But if the impact in that direction has been considerable its effect on the historiography of modern philosophy has been enormous. There is scarcely a chapter on the history of sixteenth or seventeenth century philosophy that does not have to take it into account. Nor is its influence confined to the history of philosophy. Any appraisal of change in religious and political belief in the period must acknowledge its implications for those studies. Whereas before its publication, scepticism as a force in early modern thought would receive a mention, if at all, only in connection with Descartes, it is now more or less a requirement of any satisfactory history of the period to give it some real attention. It is interesting, for example, to note that Frederick Copleston's monumental *A History of Philosophy*, published in 1958, gives scarcely any attention to the topic in his volume on the classical rationalists.³ However, since the appearance of Popkin's book the story has, not surprisingly, changed. John Cottingham, for example, writes: "various forms of extreme (or 'Pyrrhonian') scepticism had been closely debated in the late sixteenth century (for

¹ Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1960; revised edition, 1964; new edition, with two further chapters, and change of title to *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979). Quotations will be from the 1979 edition.

² Some idea of that growth may be obtained from the bibliography in R. J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 352–63.

³ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. IV, *Descartes to Leibniz* (London: Burns and Oats, 1958).

example by Montaigne), and we know that varieties of such scepticism were still fashionable when Descartes wrote the *Meditations*.”⁴ A widely accepted view of the present situation is neatly summarised by Benson Mates:

Due largely to the work of Richard Popkin and his students and associates, it is now clear that the rediscovery and publication of these works [the Pyrrhonist texts of Sextus Empiricus] in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led directly to the skepticism of Montaigne, Gassendi, Descartes, Bayle and other major figures, and eventually to the preoccupation of modern philosophy, right down to the present, with attempts to refute or otherwise combat philosophical skepticism.⁵

How well do Popkin’s considerable claims about the place of scepticism in the development of modern philosophy stand up after over forty years?⁶ Has he modified his thesis in that period, and if so, why? What difference has his account made to our understanding of the history of philosophy and to our understanding of our cultural history? It is these and related questions that I shall begin to address here with the hope of offering at least provisional answers. One way in which Popkin’s central claim may be understood is as a Popperian conjecture. His hypothesis about the central place of sceptical issues at the heart of philosophical speculation in the early modern period has been enormously fruitful, explaining much and generating the broadest and sometimes the deepest research programme in the history of philosophy in the English speaking world at least in the last fifty years.

There are, however, interesting limits to seeing the work as a Popperian conjecture. These limits tell us something about the difference between history and the natural sciences. Here is one. Although there can be no doubting the boldness of the Popkin hypothesis, clearly in Popperian eyes very much a plus, there is, on the other hand,

⁴ John Cottingham, *Descartes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 34.

⁵ Benson Mates, *The Skeptic Way. Sextus Empiricus’s Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 4.

⁶ In his intellectual autobiography Popkin dates his identification of the problem to the solution of which he has contributed so much as 1951 or early 1952 with the completion of his paper for the Humanities Seminar at the University of Iowa, “The Sceptical Crisis and the Rise of Modern Philosophy.” The paper was subsequently published in three parts in the *Review of Metaphysics* 8 (1953–54), pp. 132–51, 307–33, and 499–510. Popkin’s intellectual autobiography (“Warts and All”) is to be found in Richard A. Watson and James E. Force, eds., *The Sceptical Mode in Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988), pp. 103–49.

often something rather vague about what is to count as scepticism and who is to count as a sceptic. Often this vagueness looks like a weakness—Is it really the case that certain forms of “mitigated scepticism” are really strong enough to carry the label “sceptic”? Is not everybody sceptical about some claims, at least about those that contradict what they already accept? If everybody turns out to be a sceptic of some sort has the contrast evaporated? I shall have more to say about this question later, but it is worth noting that there is a sense in which that very vagueness counts as a strength in a way in which it could never do in the natural sciences. For it is just that lack of clarity that allows Popkin to draw attention to those areas which the particular philosopher did regard as doubtful and thus brings to our attention an aspect of his thought that we might not otherwise have noticed. One example of this, but there are many others, is Popkin’s account of the place of scepticism in the thought of Thomas Hobbes. It is an aspect of Hobbes scarcely considered before and in the standard contrast between sceptic and dogmatists Hobbes would surely have to be classed with the latter: the similarities between Hobbes and Sextus Empiricus could scarcely be less. But Popkin’s examination of Hobbes’ relationship to scepticism leads to new insight about his philosophy.⁷

Perhaps something of the wider influence of *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* may be drawn from the effect it had on me personally as I read it as a young academic in the mid-1960s. For me it falls into a small class of books that had an enormous impact because they spoke in a voice with which I immediately identified. Against what I shall call the “hunting” background of so much history of philosophy, with the texts of the great dead philosophers seen primarily as targets on which apprentice philosophers might sharpen their wits, here was an attempt to tell a story which revealed something profound about the modern world. Popkin’s book was not the first to show this other way. For me the first such work was John Yolton’s *John Locke and the Way of Ideas*,⁸ which I read in 1964 as I struggled to understand the background from which Locke’s philosophy emerged. But, as well as Yolton and Popkin, there were, in

⁷ Popkin’s two papers “Hobbes and Scepticism I” and “Hobbes and Scepticism II,” written nine years apart, are reprinted in his collection, *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), pp. 9–26 and 27–49.

⁸ John Yolton, *John Locke and the Way of Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

my order of encounter, Frances Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*,⁹ many of the works of Alexandre Koyré, and soon those of D. P. Walker, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall. Each of their books had a story to tell which took me deeper into an understanding of the intellectual roots of modern thought; each of them posed problems of interpretation which took one back to the texts, both canonical and minor, from which these works had themselves sprung. It would be tempting to expand on all of these modern classics of their genre, so many published in the 1960s and which mark out that decade as a special point in intellectual history. But to do so in this context would lead us away from Popkin's work.

Perhaps the first and most obvious comment to make about *The History of Scepticism* is that it focuses on a period which sees the creation of modern philosophy. In the 1960 edition, the period is that from the early sixteenth century to the death of Descartes. By 1979 this has stretched to Spinoza and a promised further version will take us both earlier and later (i.e., from Savonarola to Bayle's article on Savonarola in the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*). But these two stopping points immediately present us with a puzzle. To regard either Descartes or Spinoza as sceptics runs quite contrary to their established identity as two of the three great rationalist philosophers of the seventeenth century. Is it then that the story to be told is that of the interaction between sceptical ideas and those of the great philosophers, more or less influenced by that scepticism? Or is it, more radically, that the supposed dogmatists are going to turn out to be not so dogmatic after all, sceptics merely robed in the trappings of dogma to mislead the locals of their more radical pretensions? In the end the answer which Popkin gives us is something of each. Whether both strands are always equally plausible is a matter which bears further exploration.

A major theme running through almost all of Popkin's work is the intimate connection between philosophical and religious ideas. But it is a central claim of his argument that there is no simple connection between, on the one hand, (religious) faith and knowledge or, on the other, scepticism and irreligion. Some of the faithful agreed that knowledge was impossible; some who look suspiciously like unbelievers can hardly be classified as sceptics. But the fact that scepti-

⁹ Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

cal arguments might be paraded on both sides of the religious divide itself testifies to the power and ubiquity of the sceptical movement. However, even if we allow that to be true, and it is again something to which we shall return, it also has to be established that philosophical scepticism in these roles was a new phenomenon. For it is a central claim of Popkin that it was the criterion of truth as an intellectual issue that was crucial to the *crise pyrrhonienne* of the early modern period. Were there, then, no sceptics in the later middle ages? Or was it that they sensibly kept quiet? There were glimpses of something more in Henry of Ghent, Nicholas of Autrecourt and other medieval figures. But because the reliability of knowledge was often given a theological justification, to have serious doubts about the veracity of the senses would be tantamount to the denial of God, or at least his benevolence, and was therefore an unlikely option. Even if Cicero's *Academica* was not wholly absent from the scene, Augustine's refutation was much better known.¹⁰ Scepticism, in short, was off the agenda. The question, therefore, is why did it get back on?

Popkin's answer is substantially two-fold. It grew out of the religious crisis of the Reformation and it was stimulated by the recovery of the ancient sceptical texts. The first of these generated "the problem of finding a criterion of truth", first for theology and then for natural knowledge. Luther claimed that conscience unaided could give us truth; the Church of course rejected this claim and argued that knowledge was not easy to come by, but that tradition embodied in the one true Church was the safest bet. But for the Church to admit the force of the sceptical argument, as is at least implicitly conceded in this response, she had already had to have moved from the earlier explanation for the lack of scepticism in the middle ages. Scepticism had somehow got in through the back door, if not in the front.

The fact of the matter is that any attempt to identify the Church's position in the later middle ages (or at any other time) as homogeneous is always likely to exaggerate the unity of thought. No doubt there had always been sceptics within the Church and the challenge of Luther allowed space for them to emerge. And emerge they did, with Erasmus to the fore: the interpretation of the Bible was so full

¹⁰ Cf. C. B. Schmitt, "The Rediscovery of Ancient Skepticism," ed. Myles Burnyeat, *The Skeptical Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), p. 227.

of difficulty that the only rational way forward was to accept the wisdom of the Church, even though matters could not be finally settled. Luther, in contrast, committed to the certainty of direct knowledge of God's word, could see this only as backsliding. On the one hand the reformers, Lutherans and Calvinists alike, certain in their knowledge, on the other, the mildly sceptical, we might say, reasonable, response of the leading intellectuals within the Church.

We may wonder if the theological issues were the only ones pushing towards the epistemological dispute that was clearly looming, if it had not yet already arrived. Popkin is of course right to see the arrival on the intellectual scene of the text of Sextus Empiricus in 1562 as a major event. The evidence that he, along with the late and much missed Charles Schmitt, amassed for its impact is strong and persuasive.¹¹ It provided heavy artillery with which to assault the citadels of complacency that were to be found all over Europe. But, if we were to accept anything of Lakatos' dictum that theories retain their hold over us, despite known difficulties within them (falsifying evidence, for example), until a better theory turns up, then it may be wondered if scepticism alone will suffice to explain the dynamics of the intellectual upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To be fair, Popkin never makes that claim. But there is a danger, as we read his book, of thinking that it is the only force driving the changes. We must not forget that at the *very same time* (certainly no later) as the words of Sextus Empiricus were beginning to bite into the European consciousness so were those of Lucritius' *De Rerum Natura*, with their message of an Epicurean atomism and a quite new view of the universe from the standard offering of the universities.¹² And, most importantly, Epicurean atomism was not merely a theory about the constituents of matter, and indeed all substance, it was also an epistemology, and one seen by the Church at large as being at least as dangerous as any sceptical attack on its authority.

Without entering far into the nature and force of the atomist revival it is important to see that its account of matter was in many ways compatible with the outlook of the sceptic and in some ways

¹¹ Cf. Schmitt, "The Rediscovery of Ancient Skepticism," passim, the first version of which was published in 1972.

¹² *De Rerum Natura* was first printed in 1473 (Brescia) and 1486 (Verona) nearly one hundred years before Sextus Empiricus. On its early reception see Andrew Pyle, *Atomism and Its Critics* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), esp. pp. 222–25.

reinforced the sceptical arguments. An obvious way in which this was so is with regard to the primary-secondary quality distinction, so central to the atomist's account of matter and its perception. For it was clear to everyone that the atomist's claim about the basic properties raised doubts about our knowledge of the natural world. Appearance and reality were institutionalised as different. How, then, could it be said that the senses gave us a knowledge of external reality? Atomism was itself driving an independent form of scepticism. But, from a large number of perspectives, atomism and scepticism were not only very different theories but also very different *kinds* of theory. Sextus himself was sure of that and underlined how his philosophy differed from that of Democritus. For Democritus claimed that "truly [there are] atoms and the void."¹³ For Sextus such a claim was sufficient to mark him out as one of the Dogmatists.

It is a central claim of Popkin that there was a *crise pyrrhonienne* in the early seventeenth century. This might be questioned from at least two quite different directions. The first is that the Pyrrhonian sceptic in his classical manifestation was not somebody who worried about the fact that he could not know anything. It was a way of life that precisely rejected the position that a lack of knowledge in itself constituted a problem. The suspension of judgement was a route to tranquillity, not crisis. That it was taken in another way in the sixteenth century just underlines that the new sceptics were not true Pyrrhonists.

Popkin may well be willing to concede this point. For what he argues is that the direction of impact of Sextus Empiricus was towards a form of Catholic fideism. The sceptical crisis was indeed a crisis precisely because the new readers of Sextus accepted his destructive arguments but not his tranquil conclusions. They were too wedded to the rationalist philosophical tradition to be comfortable with suspension of judgement as an end in itself, but could see no final certainties. The only way forward was to accept something on faith, and begin from there. But fideists, so considered, are not Pyrrhonian sceptics, even though they may well be (were) touched by their reading of Sextus Empiricus. Yet it is instructive that the leading force for scepticism in the sixteenth century, the person most obviously

¹³ *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Book I, 30 "Wherein Skepticism differs from the Democritean Philosophy." Quotation from the edition of Benson Mates cited in Note 5 above, p. 119.

influenced by Pyrrhonism, Michel de Montaigne, sees Pyrrhonism as the route to religion: "No system discovered by Man has greater usefulness nor a greater appearance of truth which shows us Man naked, empty, aware of all his natural weaknesses . . . stripped of human learning and so all the more able to lodge the divine within him, annihilating his intellect to make room for faith."¹⁴ So in a curious kind of way Montaigne does arrive at the tranquillity promised by Sextus Empiricus, but via the Christian faith. And, as such, it is not perhaps as clear as Popkin suggests that Montaigne's condition can be wholly seen as an intellectual *crise*. The point is not that sceptical arguments were not biting. It is rather that they were actually taken on board by their expositors—Montaigne, Charron, Camus—and incorporated within their version of Christian philosophy, which almost by definition could not be wholly sceptical.

Another key figure in the story is Gassendi. There can be no doubt of Gassendi's place in the creation of modern philosophy and of his indebtedness to Sextus Empiricus and the sceptical inheritance. He used such arguments very effectively against the Aristotelians who were his most serious target. As such, the arguments were an aid, not a source of anxiety, for Gassendi had also adopted a positive philosophy, that of Epicurean atomism, that took him far towards a complete new vision of the world. As Popkin himself says Gassendi was only a sceptic on a special definition of that term—"a more fundamental sense of sceptic"—"one who doubts that necessary and sufficient grounds or reasons can be given for our knowledge or beliefs; or one who doubts that adequate evidence can be given to show under no conditions can our knowledge or beliefs be false or illusory or dubious."¹⁵ But such a definition might with reason be regarded as too wide. Who but the dogmatic and ignorant fail to qualify? Nor was Gassendi's occupation of a *via media* a position which he reached only late in life. As Howard Jones has argued, the Carpentras manuscript suggests otherwise.¹⁶ Gassendi's assault on the Aristotelians was in part motivated by his belief that he had a

¹⁴ *An Apology for Raymond Sebond*, trans. and ed. by M. A. Screech (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1987), p. 74.

¹⁵ *A History of Scepticism*, p. 104.

¹⁶ Howard Jones, *Pierre Gassendi 1592–1655. An Intellectual Biography* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1981), pp. 260–61.

better theory up his sleeve in the form of the philosophy of Epicurus, suitably modified, a commitment which began as early as 1626.¹⁷

What the Gassendi story illustrates is the difficulty of stating precisely what is to count as scepticism. There can be no doubt at all after Popkin's account that sceptical philosophy was playing a telling role in French thought from the 1560s onwards. But it did not achieve that effect by conversion. It was more insidious. It damaged many beliefs but destroyed few, even if it laid the seeds for their final destruction in the decades, even centuries, ahead.

Popkin gives a central place to Marin Mersenne in his story and this is undoubtedly deserved. Mersenne not only brought the great Parisian figures of the 1630s and 1640s together and kept them in touch when they were apart, but he also offered a powerful response to the strongly negative nature of Pyrrhonism. *La Verité des Sciences, contre les Septiques ou Pyrrhoniens* (1625) was that response. Mersenne argues for a probabilist epistemology of the kind that Popkin calls constructive or mitigated scepticism. But what is far less clear is who exactly are the Pyrrhonists that Mersenne opposes. As with the more general threat of atheism, the enemy appears to be a theory, and an ancient one at that, rather than a set of spokesmen for that theory within contemporary society. Furthermore the response of Mersenne was not new. As Peter Dear has argued Mersenne drew on a form of Ciceronian probabilism of a kind which was already widely supported by the Jesuits.¹⁸ The point suggests more of a continuity with earlier thought than Popkin's picture of a the dramatic injection of Pyrrhonian ideas implies.

If it is Montaigne that sets the pace for Pyrrhonism in Popkin's account then it is Descartes who must be the test case. For the thesis is that we must see the central figures of the period as in their various ways responding to the *crise pyrrhonnienne*, battling to emerge whole on the other side. Here it is that the precise biography of Descartes becomes crucial. Central to Popkin's picture of Descartes confronting the Pyrrhonians is the Paris meeting in late 1628 (the date is not certain) at the home of the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Bagni.

¹⁷ Cf. Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, *lettres de Peiresc* . . . , ed. Phillippe Tamizey de Larroque, Tome IV, No. II, n. 179ff., in *Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France*, 2e ser. (Paris, 1893), and Jones, *Pierre Gassendi*, p. 25.

¹⁸ Cf. Peter Dear, *Mersenne and the Learning of the Schools* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), Chap. 3 and esp. p. 27.

At the gathering a chemist, Chandoux, expounded his new and anti-Scholastic philosophy to an audience of *savants* which included Mersenne and, of course, Descartes. Chandoux was applauded by all except Descartes. But according to Baillet's account, which Popkin quotes, when Descartes was asked what he thought of the speech he attacked it because "the speaker and the audience were willing to accept probability as the standard of truth."¹⁹ But if it was really their acquiescence with the standard of probability that Descartes was attacking then it was not Pyrrhonian scepticism that drove his response. Rather, it was dissatisfaction with the probabilists. This was a position with which he was well familiar as it had been taught by the Jesuits at La Flèche, and which was accepted by implication by the other *savants* in Chandoux's audience.²⁰ But if Descartes was objecting only to probabilism then his own positive philosophy was an attempt to achieve something more sure than the merely probable, not a response to an intellectual crisis generated from his encounter with the writings of Sextus Empiricus. Is there really any strong evidence that Descartes ever went "on a voyage into the depths of complete scepticism?"²¹ Of course he wanted certainty and uses the well-known sceptical arguments on the way to reaching his goal. But the available evidence suggests more strongly that the perceived enemy were primarily the probabilists and only secondarily the Pyrrhonians. As he says in several places, and as the points are summarised by Popkin, "the doubts were put forward for therapeutic and dramatic effect to make the reader see first the weakness of what he now believed, and then the strength of Descartes' principles. He had no intention of inculcating scepticism, but was feigning the disease in order to show more forcefully what its cure was."²² These (self) characterisations of Descartes ring true to me. He seems far too cool to be regarded as someone tormented by

¹⁹ *A History of Scepticism*, p. 174. Cf. Adrien Baillet, *Vie de M. Descartes* (Paris: Collection Grandses, La Table Ronde, 1946), p. 70, and Descartes's letter to Villebressieu, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1996), Vol. I, pp. 212–14.

²⁰ Descartes's latest biographer, Stephen Gaukroger, can also find no direct confrontation of the Pyrrhonists in Descartes' encounter with Chandoux. Cf. *Descartes. An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 183–85.

²¹ *The History of Scepticism*, p. 180.

²² *The History of Scepticism*, p. 210.

sceptical doubts, "who had to fight his way through scepticism to arrive at dogmatic truth."²³

If this is correct how much damage does this inflict on Popkin's thesis? The answer must be that it is not nearly as much as one might at first suppose. For even if it is true that there was no *crise pyrrhonienne* on the scale Popkin suggests, either personally for Descartes or in contemporary French culture at large, there can be no doubt that a great deal of new and important thinking, and not only in France, was driven by a search for new method and firm foundations. At most it plays down the dramatic nature of the confrontation between sceptical positions and the more positive claims but it does not deny its reality.

According to Popkin, and few would disagree with him, Descartes's attempt to meet the sceptics was unsuccessful. After their publication the critics swarmed all over his arguments and revealed that they did not meet the challenge. Descartes's glorious failure marked a crucial event in modern thought: "Both traditional philosophy and the new system rested ultimately on an indefensible set of assumptions accepted only on faith."²⁴ We may well wish to challenge this last characterisation of the basis of acceptance. The systems of the probabilists, for example, might be thought to gain support from the general coherence of their accounts of the world. Popkin assumes perhaps too easily that only some kind of foundationalist epistemology could bridge the gap. (Perhaps he is, unwittingly, too Cartesian himself?) And certainly "faith" seems too feeble a concept to capture the many possible lines of argument that could be and were presented in support of the various theories. As Newton was to urge to good effect, that an explanation may be defeated if some contrary, but unconfirmed, hypothesis were to turn out to be correct is not in itself sufficient reason to abandon it.

The 1979 edition of *Scepticism* of course takes Popkin's story forward to include La Peyrère and Spinoza. With their inclusion there is a temptation for the already wide scope of the word sceptic to become even broader. La Peyrère was later to be the subject of much fuller study by Popkin²⁵ and in a sense he is a crucial figure for his later

²³ *The History of Scepticism*, p. 245.

²⁴ *The History of Scepticism*, p. 212.

²⁵ Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676). His Life Work and Influence* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

thinking, and especially for his account of the place of millenarian thought in the seventeenth century. This "Third Force"—the Millenarian hypothesis and its supporters—together with the philosophies of Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism, were "reacting to the sceptical challenge and offering theories to combat it."²⁶

La Peyrère has a place in Popkin's story because he is there depicted as a powerful influence towards religious scepticism, and religious scepticism is seen as an outcome of the general *crise pyrrhonienne*. Central to La Peyrère's account was his pre-Adamite hypothesis which ran quite contrary to orthodox interpretations of the Bible. If Adam and Eve were not the first people, if the creation story was undermined, if the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was rejected, what uncertainties might there not be about the rest of the biblical story? What did it mean any more to call it the word of God?

Almost certainly Popkin is right to see La Peyrère as influenced by the sceptical thought of his times. But once again to call him a sceptic surely places him much closer to the Pyrrhonists than his own method would justify. For he relied on (Cartesian) scientific method to reach his conclusions in biblical scholarship. And he used such a method because he believed it generated truth, or at least high probability. And, indeed, it led him to his own, at best, highly contentious millenarian theory of a Jewish Messiah. He was, in short, what was soon to be called an Enthusiast. So it is far from clear that we should regard La Peyrère as a sceptic at all, even though his claims often ran quite contrary to the official church position. Similar remarks are in order with regard to Spinoza. Spinoza is a Cartesian. Although his conclusions are theologically at odds with authority there was no philosopher more certain that truth could be reached. His claims for natural philosophy, which he held could reach knowledge of necessary truths about nature, could not be more distant from those of Sextus Empiricus. If Spinoza is a sceptic then so are Malebranche and Leibniz; Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Newton will have to be described as sceptical fanatics. So, in answer to a question posed at the outset, by introducing La Peyrère and Spinoza into the story Popkin has in a significant way modified his thesis. He has widened the mouth of the net with which he catches his sceptics. It is not surprising that more and more of the intellectual fish of the seventeenth century are to be found inside.

²⁶ Cf. *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 90.

Yet for all such qualification the major thrust of Popkin's claim remains. He has demonstrated that challenging accepted ideas with the deployment of sceptical argument became more widespread or more effective in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than it appears ever to have been since at least the Hellenistic world. It has remained a powerful force ever since. And it contributes significantly to the intellectual and other uncertainties so prevalent at the close of the twentieth century. Popkin's great achievement is, with classic force, to have made us aware of that important, perhaps crucial, change of direction. For that we are all greatly in his debt. Whether it was so marked or so singular as he has claimed awaits further research to determine.

One final thought which links with future enquiry. At its best the history of philosophy, as history more generally, requires at its cutting edge a special kind of ability to locate data and to see its significance. The universe in which such data is hidden is composed of the libraries, both great and small, and other collections of paper in desks and attics, scattered across our planet. One of Dick Popkin's special abilities is to locate within such collections, in Paris, London, Tel Aviv, Los Angeles or Amsterdam, hidden treasures which illuminate our story. He is a consummate digger. It is a quality that he wears lightly. But it is a talent, not easily learnt, that needs to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Dick should give us a memoir of *Discoveries*. He has still much to teach us.

LUISA SIMONUTTI

Conferring with Dick Popkin

I met Dick Popkin in the early Eighties, during a few days of study at the Warburg Institute in London. I told him then that, after having read his writings and heard him speak at animated conferences and lively seminars all over five continents, I was happy to have finally gotten to meet him during a brief pause in his frenetic travels. Smilingly, he confirmed to me that he was quite rightly referred to as a "wandering Jew."

Dick ignores academic pedigree. One need not be a member of any particular academic institution or "school" but rather to be a follower of a historical, critical research method to gain his sympathetic, polite, and total attention. There are no rules which circumscribe his curiosity and his genuine interest in fellow scholars. Dick thus is particularly able to stimulate critical study in the young, be they his own students or those coming from different cultural contexts.

Thanks to Dick, I spent a marvelous time at the William Clark Memorial Library in Los Angeles. It was one of many opportunities to talk with him at length: each encounter was a momentous event which opened new and original perspectives for interpreting the history of the ideas of the past and present. Nor is the bond with Dick and his delightful wife, Julie, merely academic. They are warm and sympathetic on a human level. I remember the time when they were so delighted by the surprise and astonishment of my (then small) children when, for the first time, they saw fireworks from the Popkin home in Pacific Palisades.

We have met several times over the course of the past fifteen years in England, California, and Italy. With Dick I was able to share interesting specialized congresses on More at Oxford and on Spinoza at Cortona. One aspect of Dick's role in stimulating scholarship is often overlooked, however. Of course, Dick is the discoverer of, and authority on, not only rare texts, manuscripts, philosophers, and minor but

crucial authors. He is also a great promoter of historic and precious collections and libraries. He organized a most memorable convention at the Marsh Library in Dublin. Dick's authoritative presence and historical-critical erudition was instrumental in giving impetus to a revitalization of the Marsh collection as a scholarly resource.

His acute analysis, precise definitions, and intriguing questions are, for me, a stimulus to new research and further investigations. His own scholarly contributions through his voluminous writings are immense. But, at a conference, one has the opportunity to get to know Dick which is a truly invaluable experience. He easily communicates his great knowledge while furnishing precise recommendations and advice and smoothing away doubts. Once one's initial reverential embarrassment—as students before the great teacher—is overcome, Dick makes every discussion exciting and enriching.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND SCIENCE:
JOHN LOCKE AND LIMBORCH'S
CIRCLE IN AMSTERDAM

Luisa Simonutti

The Times growing now troublesome to those of my *Lord Shaftesburys* Principles as to Publick matters, and more especially dangerous for such as had been intimate with him, Mr. Locke, with Reason, apprehended himself not to be very safe in *England*; for tho' he knew there was no just matter of Accusation against him, yet it was not unlikely, as things then were, but that he might have come to be question'd, and should he on any pretence, have been put under confinement, tho' for no very long time, yet such was the State of his health, that his Life must have been thereby much indanger'd. On this account therefore he thought it most advisable for him to withdraw. And goeing at first into the West of *England* to some Friends he had there, he soon after retir'd out of *England*.¹

While reminiscing about the significant moments in the life of her recently deceased friend, John Locke, Lady Damaris Masham—daughter of the Cambridge neo-Platonist, Ralph Cudworth—provided a glimpse into the intellectual and political climate which had induced Locke to leave his own country in 1683. In this letter, sent to the Remonstrant theologian and philologist, Jean Le Clerc, in Amsterdam in the first days of 1705, she consigned to posterity the first biographical and intellectual portrait of the great philosopher.² Drawing from her personal memories, from her impressions formed

¹ This essay was written with the support of the research project «Studi e testi per la storia della tolleranza in Europa nei secoli XVI-XVIII». I am most grateful to Antonio Rotondò, director of the project, for his helpful comments. Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Jean Le Clerc, 12 January, 1705, in Jean Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, 4 vols., eds. Maria Grazia and Mario Sina (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1987–1997), 2:505.

² On Locke and Damaris Masham's relations, see Maurice Cranston, *John Locke. A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), Chap. 16; Luisa Simonutti, "Damaris Cudworth Masham: una Lady della Repubblica delle Lettere," in *Scritti in onore di Eugenio Garin* (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 1987), pp. 141–65; Sarah Hutton, "Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham: Between Platonism and Enlightenment," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 1, 1 (1993), pp. 29–54.

from her epistolary exchange with Locke during his Holland years, and from the stories which he told her in person (at Oates, Lady Masham's stately manor house where he finally resided permanently beginning in 1691), Lady Masham wrote:

In the later end of the year 1683 he went into *Holland*, where enjoying better health than he had of a long time done in *England* or even in the fine Air of Montpelier he had full leisure to prosecute his Thoughts on the Subject of *Humane Understanding*: a work which in probability he never would have finish'd had he continu'd here. How he pass'd his time in this Retreat you can better tell than I. I have only heard say that he liv'd here very retir'dly: happy (whilst at Amsterdam) in your Conversation and that of the Excellent Mons.^r Limborch, whom he often wish'd for in England after his return hither.³

Section 1. A Safe Sanctuary to the Innocent

Noting the date and the place of disembarkation, Locke described "the cleanness of the town and convenience for shipping to come almost into every street at Rotterdam (is) very admirable."⁴ Locke arrived in Rotterdam on 7 September, 1683,⁵ after having sent two letters to Edward Clarke—who was also close to the *entourage* of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Locke expressed his gratitude to Clarke, his life-long friend, for all that he and his family had done, and were doing, for him. Concluding the letter of 26 August, which is once again full of advice and assignments for Clarke (and not lacking in concerns for the immediate future), Locke adds:

Upon consideration I have thought it best to make a will, which you will find amongst the other papers, by which you may be legally entitled to whatsoever I leave; and it being uncertain whether that may be more or less, I can without making another formal will give you

³ Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Jean Le Clerc, 12 January, 1705, in Jean Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, 2:505.

⁴ Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 124 (cited hereafter as BO). See also: C. D. van Strien, *British Travellers in Holland during the Stuart Period. Edward Browne and John Locke as Tourists in the United Provinces* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993). All the Mss. (in the text, footnotes, and appendix) are quoted by permission. I wish to thank the Head of the Manuscripts Department of The Bodleian Library, Oxford, and of the British Library, London for their kindness and help.

⁵ Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976–1989), p. 410, n. 17.

new directions to dispose of what I shall leave as occasions and circumstances may vary.⁶

When Locke disembarked in Rotterdam in 1683, he was fifty-two years old. Having decided to seek refuge in Holland for political and prudential considerations (he hadn't yet been hit with the expulsion from Christ Church or Charles II's sentence), Locke left behind him an England whose Crown was shaken by suspicions and plots by both Catholics and Protestants as well as by the discovery of the Rye House Plot. Moreover, Locke was stricken with the recent death of his friend and protector, the First Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury had preceded Locke into voluntary exile in Holland to avoid being arrested on the accusation of having plotted against the King. Since the late 1670s Shaftesbury had been a convinced supporter of the anti-Catholic rebellion that was to culminate in the Rye House Plot. The discovery of the plot in the Spring and Summer of 1683, the imprisonment of some conspirators, the death sentences for Russell and Sydney and the ambiguities of the Earl of Essex's suicide were all events that threw a sinister light on the Whig party and, in particular, upon the First Earl of Shaftesbury's *entourage*.

Beginning in the early 1660s until the day he died, Locke reflected closely on the laws of nature and ethics with famous results. In the years preceding his first meeting with the Earl in 1666, Locke composed his first two brief treatises on the relationship between political and ecclesiastic power. In these treatises he examines the sovereign's right to intervene in the sphere of religious worship and in speculative opinion (matters not explicitly commanded by the Holy Scriptures) for the purpose of guaranteeing political order, peace and social stability.⁷

In the Spring of 1667, Locke moved to London as the personal physician of the Earl of Shaftesbury and soon, at the urging of the Earl, became his secretary and adviser. In the same year Locke wrote his *Essay on Toleration* in which his complete about-face on the theme

⁶ Locke to Edward Clarke, 26 August, 1683, in *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. De Beer, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976–1989), 2:603.

⁷ For the two treatises on toleration written by Locke, at the beginning of the 1660s, see the edition in John Locke, *Scritti editi e inediti sulla tolleranza*, ed. C. A. Viano (Torino: Taylor, 1961). See also C. A. Viano, *John Locke. Dal razionalismo all'illuminismo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1960) and the bio-bibliographical study of H. O. Christophersen, *A Bibliographical Introduction to the Study of John Locke* (Oslo: I Kommissjon hos Jacob Dybwad, 1930). For reasons of space in this essay, the vast Lockian bibliography is only cited when the text or study gives an explicit reference.

of toleration and on the right of resistance appears evident; this change was due to the influence of new friendships made among latitudinarians, Whigs, and Republicans, and, especially, because of Shaftesbury's sway.⁸ In this new work, Locke posed limits to the sovereign's right to intervene in religious matters in favor of the individual's choice and he recognized that "speculative opinions and divine worshipp, are those things alone which have an absolute and universall right to toleration."⁹ He also writes:

The other thing that has just claim to an unlimited toleration is the place, time, and manner of worshipping my God, because this is a thing wholly between God and me, and of an eternall concernment above the reach and extent of politics and governments, which are but for my well-being in this world.¹⁰

Shaftesbury wanted Locke by his side during his chancellery and the execution of his other political and economic duties. In the late 1660s, while sojourning in France from his duties as a political advisor to Shaftesbury, Locke wrote the *Constitutions of Carolina* and *Considerations* on the interest and value of money and in addition to some essays on agricultural economy. He was always close to the Earl, even during his sojourn in France between 1675 and 1679, the Earl's own years of political disgrace, and the clandestine meetings at the Rye House.

Locke doesn't say anything about the months preceding his departure for Holland in 1683 and his correspondence in that period appears incomplete. A few lines written in code and sent to Clarke¹¹ probably belong to Locke's first days in the country; in some of the letters from this period there appears a prudential care in naming acquaintances and friends ("and truly, could I have but the conversation of some few persons I could name, with quiet and freedom")¹² and in questioning his correspondents about recent developments in English politics.¹³

⁸ This aspect has been analyzed accurately by John Marshall, *John Locke. Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). See also Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, and John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁹ J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Toleration*, in *Scritti editi e inediti sulla tolleranza*, p. 83.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Locke to Edward Clarke, autumn, 1683 [?], in *The Correspondence*, 2:603-4.

¹² Locke to Edward Clarke, 21 November, 1683 [?], in *The Correspondence*, 2:607.

¹³ By comparing the *Journals* and the references in the letters of his correspon-

In a long letter written in Amsterdam 28 November, 1684, to Earl Pembroke, Locke stated his case against the accusations that were to result in his expulsion from Christ Church for having plotted against the Crown with seditious libel and pamphleteering; Locke took the opportunity to clear every suspicion against him, even from his visiting English exiles during his first few months in Holland: "Those who are particularly named for my Companions, I assure your Lordship with the truth I would speake my last breath, I never saw out of England, nor in a long time before I left it."¹⁴

Denying his involvement in any subversive plan against the Crown or in support of the Duke of Monmouth, Locke describes his first season in Holland:

My time was most spent alone, at home by my fires side, where I confesse I writ a good deale, I thinke I may say, more then ever I did in soe much time in my life, but noe libells, unlesse perhaps it may be a libell against all mankinde to give some account of the weakness and shortnesse of humane understanding, for upon that my old theme de Intellectu humano (on which your Lordship knows I have been a good while a hammering), has my head been beating, and my pen scribleing all the time I have been here except what I have spent in travelling about to see the country.¹⁵

In spite of his denial, Locke's unequivocal relationship with the "disaffected English" who sought refuge with the hospitable Dutch in order to escape their likely fates of prison and execution in England has been amply underlined by Cranston and Ashcraft.¹⁶ After his arrival in Rotterdam, Locke soon discovered the hospitality of Amsterdam, a city well-known—together with Utrecht—for the asylum given to refugees (not only English) and for the political ferment that took place in its tolerant bosom.¹⁷ He was probably the guest more

dents it becomes plausible that Locke, in these Holland years, wrote more letters than those which have survived. For a detailed reconstruction—albeit not a completely acceptable one—of the political correspondence for the twenty year period between 1670–90, see Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*. For a different interpretation, see Mark Goldie's review of Ashcraft's *Revolutionary Politics* in *English Historical Review* 103 (January, 1988), pp. 124–7, and John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. M. Goldie, (London: Everyman J. M. Dent and Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993).

¹⁴ Locke to Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, 28 November, 1684, in *The Correspondence*, 2:665.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* See also Locke to Edward Clarke, 22 December, 1684, in *The Correspondence*, 2:671.

¹⁶ Cranston, *John Locke*, Chaps. 16–9; Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, Chaps. 9–10.

¹⁷ See Henry Méchoulan, *Amsterdam au temps de Spinoza. Argent et liberté* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990) and Antonio Rotondò, *Europe et Pays-Bas*.

than once of the goldsmith Thomas Dare who took care of numerous financial transactions for Locke.¹⁸ Dare was linked to Shaftesbury, during Shaftesbury's English years and the period of his own Dutch exile. Dare maintained relations between English exiles and friends in the Netherlands until he himself repaired to England with the Duke of Monmouth's rebels. But the list of Locke's "disaffected" friends is much longer.¹⁹

Proof of the extent of the political role of the dissidents, the radical English, and Scottish exiles is found in the intensity with which the British Envoys Extraordinary of the Crown at La Haye—first, Thomas Chudleigh (until December, 1683) and, later, Bevil Skelton (until March, 1685)—cultivated an information network in Holland.²⁰ The English Crown's intent was to dismantle the conspiratorial activities that found room in the loosely knit tolerance of the Dutch for

Evolution, réélaboration et diffusion de la tolérance aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles (Firenze: Università degli studi, Dipartimento di Storia, 1992).

¹⁸ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, *passim*. See also Cranston, *John Locke*, p. 249, and Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, Chap. 9.

¹⁹ For these political aspects, see: Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, pp. 378–80; Gordon J. Schochet, "Radical Politics and Ashcraft's Treatise on Locke," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50 (1989), pp. 491–510; Idem, "The Act of Toleration and the Failure of Comprehension: Persecution, Nonconformity, and Religious Indifference", in D. Hoak and M. Feingold, eds., *The World of William and Mary—Anglo-Dutch Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688-89* (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 165–187; Lois G. Schwoerer, "Locke, Lockean Ideas, and the Glorious Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990), pp. 531–48; M. Goldie, "John Locke's Circle and James II," *The Historical Journal* 35 (1992), pp. 557–86.

²⁰ Austin Frazer, one of the informers of the English envoys in Holland, described effectively in a letter 3 November 1683, sent to Dordrecht, the climate of suspicion that Locke found in the first years of his sojourn in Holland. The attention of the English Envoys was turned to the incipient political and religious dissent in the Low Countries caused by the meeting of French and English exile dissidents with the fringe Dutch dissidents who kept the political and cultural life of the country in continual ferment. Frazer writes: "Hon.ble Sr. In obediend to yo.r Hono.le Commands I have made the best Enquiry possible concerning the words of Holbeiks Prayer, relating to our Dissenters and the Traitors that use fled out of England, but cannot hear he prayed for any but the Persecuted Protestants in England, France, and Germany, which I am inform'd is the common stile of most of the Preaihers of his Country as well English as Dutch, as if they had an order from the States to pray in such a manner, and to expose the Government of England as Tyrannical, and an enemi to the Protestant Religions. I hear the Lady Bartley is lodged at one stewards a scotch man in Utrecht, whether my Lord Gray comes sometimes and paies her a visit. The D. of M. and the rest are at Cleve, and eat every day at a dutch Ordenary call'd the Hoff van Hollands but have private Lodgings. If I hear or can informe my self of any thing where in I apprehen'd his Ma.ties Service may be concern'd, I shall take the Confidence to acquaint the Hon.re with it." British Library, London, Add. Ms. 41809, f. 131r.

foreign political exiles and the consensus in the tolerant and Republican circles of the country.²¹

Section 2: Theologians and Physicians: Limborch's Circle

In the early 1680s, Locke reflected further on political theory during the writing of the *Two Treatises*²² and became engaged in the machinations of the Whig party. Contact with medical-religious circles, especially in Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam, was favorable to Locke's becoming predominately interested in epistemology and theology and to his joining to his political reflections the study and the discussion of exegetical-religious questions and as well as turning his attention towards contemporary political-religious debate.

Lady Masham describes, in a letter dated a few months after the philosopher's death, Locke's first encounter with Amsterdam Remonstrant circle upon his arrival in Holland. She emphasizes the friendship with which the Remonstrant theologian Philippus van Limborch and his religious companions welcomed the English exile and of Locke's strong impressions upon, having fled an England riddled by plots and intense political factions, finding himself in an intellectual *milieu* kindled by theological debates:

J'ai vû avec beacoup (*sic*) de plaisir dans vôtre lettre comment vous fites connoissance en Hollande, avec Mr. Locke. Il étoit ne et avoit fait ses études dans le temps que le Calvinisme étoit à la mode en Angleterre; mais cette Doctrine y étoit fort decreditée avant que je vinsse au monde, de sorte que Mr. Locke avoit accoutumé de parler des opinions que j'avois toujours trouvées en vogue dans l'Université et parmi le Clergé comme de quelque chose qui lui étoit nouveau. Et comme plusieurs années avant que d'aller en Hollande il n'avoit eû que tres peu de commerce avec des Ecclesiastique, je m'imagine que les sentimens qu'il trouva reçus parmi vous, lui plurent d'autant plus

²¹ The collection of letters sent to the Secretary of State by the Envoys in Holland—and conserved among the Middleton Papers (British Library, Add. Ms. 41809–41821), especially in Vols. VII–XIX—constitute the rich material upon which Ashcraft drew for his reconstruction of Locke's radical activities. For a critical review of some central theses in the work of Ashcraft, see the analyses by Mark Goldie (in the review cited above in Note 13) and Marshall, *John Locke*, Chap. 6.

²² For the problem of work's date and for the different interpretative arguments of Peter Laslett, *John Locke. Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) and R. Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, see the analytical summary and revision by J. Marshall, *John Locke*, pp. 222–4.

qu'il n'étoit pas fort accoûtumé à entendre parler des Théologiens d'une maniere si raisonnable. Mais quoi qu'il en soit, je sai qu'il a toujours continué ici de parler avec beaucoup d'affection non seulement de ses amis qui en Hollande sont dans ces sentimens, mais en general de toute la societé des Remonstrans.²³

In January, 1684, probably while looking for secret lodgings to isolate himself from the persecutions which had stricken some of his English correspondents such as, in particular, his friend Edward Clarke, Locke renewed his friendship with his old Dutch friend, Pieter Guenelon, whom he had met in Paris in 1678. He was a physician in Amsterdam and the son-in-law of the well-known medical doctor, Egbertus Veen, in whose house Locke would, upon more than one occasion, find a secure shelter during his Holland years. An *entourage* of influential Amsterdam physicians also cordially welcomed the English philosopher. Thanks to the complicity of these friends, Locke chose Dr. van der Linden as a pseudonym with which to hide his identity. Dr. van der Linden was the name of an actual doctor who had lived in Amsterdam twenty years previously and whose works Locke had himself admired.

In his *Journals*, he remarks upon the hospitality offered him in the first days of 1683 by the physician Caspar Sibelius²⁴ and of his curiosity at seeing him use a bellows to stir up his fire efficiently. His visits with Sibelius were not even interrupted by the departure of the physician from Amsterdam for Deventer and then to England. Besides long conversations about medical questions, the two friends took trips and holidays in the country together.

Within the few months, Locke became part of the "Collegium privatum medicum," a private association that was without a regular location but which rotated the regular meetings among the houses of its members. On 22 May, 1684, Locke listed in his diary the names of the people that enlivened the *Collegium* meetings without neglecting to add, at the end, his own. In attendance, besides the

²³ Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Philippus van Limborch, 17 September, 1705, Amsterdam, Universiteits Bibliotheek, (cited hereafter as UBA) Ms. M.31.c. On Limborch and the Remonstrants see: P. J. Barnouw, *Philippus van Limborch* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963); A. W. Harrison, *The Beginnings of Arminianism to the Synod of Dort* (London: University Press of London, 1926); Idem, *Arminianism* (London: Duckworth, 1937); C. Bangs, *Arminius. A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971); L. Simonutti, *Arminianesimo e tolleranza nel Seicento olandese. Il carteggio Ph. van Limborch-J. Le Clerc* (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1984).

²⁴ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 7, 162, 11/12 December, 1683.

theologian who was curious about scientific matters, i.e., Philippus van Limborch, were: Matthew Slade, founder of the college in 1664 along with anatomist Gerard Blasius; doctor Egbertus Veen and Pieter Guenellon; the physician Abrahamus Quina; Abrahamus Cyprianus, who at the time was a student of medicine and future professor of anatomy to Franeker; and Pieter Bernagie, who was also a professor of anatomy but also a versatile spirit who directed the State Theatre.²⁵ Beyond the strong ties of friendship with Guenellon and Veen, Locke remained close to, and was in epistolary contact with, several exponents of the "Collegie."

It's worth underlining not only the professional affinity of the members of the *Collegium* but also some social and religious characteristics of the members. Cypranius and Guenellon were descendants of a Huguenot family, but Quina and Bernagie could also boast of French roots. Similarly, in the area of religion, there were some significant connections. In marrying a niece of Jacobus Arminius (the inspiration of the Remonstrant sect) in a second marriage, Veen had become part of the famous theologian's family. More indirectly, following his marriage to a daughter of Veen's, Guenellon also became connected with this religious *milieu*. Finally, Limborch had been professor of theology at the Remonstrant Seminary of Rotterdam since 1668.²⁶

It has been emphasized more than once, from the memorial letter composed by Lady Masham immediately after the death of the philosopher and in her correspondence with friends in Holland,²⁷ the

²⁵ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 79. For an analysis of the medical circle in Amsterdam, and more generally in Holland, and for the importance that it exercised upon Locke's reflections, readings, and medical practice in these years by Locke (referred to not only in the *Journals* but in particular in Ms. e. 4) (and in Mss. f. 18-24), see E. T. Withington, "John Locke as a medical practitioner," *Janus* 2 (1909), pp. 1-15; Patrick Romanell, "Locke as a Medical Pragmatist," *Ithaca* 26 (1962), pp. 279-82; and, in particular, Kenneth Dewhurst, *John Locke (1632-1704) Physician and Philosopher. A Medical Biography with an Edition of the Medical Notes in his Journals* (London: The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1963). In Holland, Locke became a friend of the famous physician, Francis Mercury van Helmont. For the role which this friendship may have played upon Locke's thought, see Allison P. Coudert, "John Locke and Francis Mercury van Helmont," *infra*.

²⁶ On this *milieu* see also Rosalie L. Colie, "John Locke in the Republic of Letters," in J. S. Bromley, E. H. Kossmann, eds., *Britain and The Netherlands. Papers Delivered to the Oxford-Netherlands Historical Conference* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), pp. 111-29; C. L. Thijssen-Schoute, *Uit de Republiek der Letteren* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), esp. Chap. 6.

²⁷ Integrating the biographical reconstruction of Damaris Masham with the accounts

importance—from both a personal and intellectual point of view—of Locke's friendship with Limborch, Le Clerc, and, generally, his contact with this Remonstrant circle. Again in the words of Lady Masham, addressed to Limborch, we find evidence of the importance of this great friendship:

Rien ne pouvoit m'être plus agréable que de recevoir d'une personne que je considere si fort que vous des marques d'une estime aussi tendre que celle que vous faites paroître pour un Ami tel que Mons.^r Locke, dont la perte m'est si sensible. On ne sauroit trouver des termes plus propres que ceux que vous employez pour exprimer le cas que vous faisiez de cet excellent homme.²⁸

In January, 1684, the members of the *Collegium* gathered to assist in the dissection of a lioness who had died of exposure to the rigid winter. Guenellon also invited his friend Locke to this exceptional event at which Locke was first to meet Limborch. Twenty years after this meeting, Limborch wrote to Lady Masham and recalled that:

Among the other spectators, Locke (who knew from Guenellon that I was a professor of theology for the Remonstrants) was also present; he introduced himself to me, and we afterwards had many conversations about religion, in which he acknowledged that he had long attributed to the remonstrants doctrines very different from those which they held, and now that he understood what they really were, he was surprised to find how closely they agreed with many of his own opinions.²⁹

In the months following this meeting and in particular during his period in Amsterdam—interrupted frequently by trips and to other

of Limborch and his own memories, Le Clerc wrote: "Mr. Locke came thither and became acquainted with him several other Physicians. Here he met with Monsieur Limborch, Professor of Divinity among the Remonstrants, with whom he contracted a Friendship, that continu'd during the whole Course of his Life, and which he cultivated after his Return into England. I had the Honour also to be acquainted with him some time after, and have spent several hours with Pleasure and Profit in his Company; especially, after he told me his Mind in Philosophical Matters, which has been the Subject of many an hours Conversation." J. Le Clerc, *The Life and Character of Mr. Locke* (London, 1706), p. 11. See also the anonymous critical writing against Shaftesbury and Locke: *Reflections upon some passages in Mr. Le Clerc's Life of Mr. John Locke: In a Letter to a Friend* (London, 1711).

²⁸ Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Limborch, 26 December, 1704, UBA, Ms. M.31.b.

²⁹ Limborch to Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham, 24 March, 1705, UBA, Ms. D.III.16, 54. Partially cited by Abr. Des Amorie van der Hoeven, *De Joanne Clerico et Philippo a Limborch Dissertationes duae* (Amsterdam, 1843), pp. 47–8, and by H. R. Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke*, 2 vols. (London, 1876), 2:6. This letter, in its entirety, is published as Letter No. 2 in the Appendix to this paper.

cities until finally moving in with Benjamin Furly in Rotterdam in the early months of 1687—Locke dedicated himself to the reading of the major representative works of Remonstrant thought and of Dutch authors committed to theological debate. On 20 March, 1684, Locke noted in his *Journals*³⁰ the possession of the second edition of *Opera Theologica* by Episcopius to whom he reserves a careful reading.³¹ Some days later, he cites a passage from the same work “Dubitare sine ratione non est dubitare, sed dubitare velle aut potius nolle credere.”³² In the same list of books, Erasmus’s *Colloquia famliari* also appears—succeeded by *Adagia*—as well as works of testamentary exegesis such as the Jacob Cappel’s edition of the New Testament and Johannes Crell’s *Ethica Aristotelica et Christiana* which was published in Amsterdam in 1681. He also read some of Episcopius’s minor works and Courcelles’s *Opera Theologica*. Of this latter, he admires in particular its comment on the New Testament: “The best Edition of the N. Testament with various lections is that published by Courcellaeus himself.”³³

In these years he put himself to the test with the works of Dutch scholars, from Gronovius to Senguerdus (a teacher of Limborch’s) to numerous writings by Vossius, to the works of theologians and controversialists such as Coornhert, Uitenbogaert, van der Waeyen, van Dale, and Spinoza’s *Opera posthuma*. He went back more than once to several writings by Velthuysen—a friend and correspondent of Limborch’s—and to works of Grotius. In particular in the first months of 1684, he procured the most recent editions of this author’s *De veritate religionis Christiana* and of *De jure belli et pacis*—both published in 1680—and of *De Imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra*, in the 1677 edition. His library during the Dutch period also included

³⁰ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 36–7.

³¹ The attention reserved by Locke to the Episcopius’s work is confirmed by two corrections in Chapter VI, “De voluntate hominis ejusque libertate: item de aliis qualitatibus animae ipsius inditis aut infusis,” Section III, Book IV, pp. 356–9 of *Institutiones Theologicae* contained in his own volume of S. Episcopius, *Opera Theologica*, 2nd edition, London, 1678, kept in the “Locke Room” at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. See also, Locke to Limborch, 1 September, 1687, in *The Correspondence*, 3:262.

³² BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 57, 9 April, 1684. The passage is referred to the concluding pages of *Institutiones Theologicae*, in Episcopius, *Opera Theologica*, pp. 1–440: 437–40.

³³ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 287, 4 August, 1685. The work of Etienne de Courcelles is *Novum Jesu Christi Testamentum Interprete Sebastiano Castellione. Ex postrema ejusdem castigatione. Addita sunt Loca Parallela S. Scripturae Stephanus Curcellaeus suae Graecae editioni adjunxit. Editio Novissima* (Amsterdam, 1681).

Ecclesiarum Belgicarum confessio et catechesis in the Utrecht edition of 1660, the history of the Tridentine Council, the works of Calvin, and the Beza's work on the punishment of heretics. Moreover, the attention which Locke reserves for Old and New Testament editions and to works of Biblical exegesis written by English and Dutch authors—by Buxtorf, Spencer and especially by Louis and Jacob Cappel, for example—is significant. Among these latter authors, there are also included the ethical and theological writings of the two Crell—Johannes and Samuel—and the works of Socinians such as Volkeli, Schlichtingius, and *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*.³⁴

Finally, during his earlier sojourn in France (between 1675 and 1679), the philosopher had read several Huguenot political-religious responses to the growing persecution by the Catholic Sun King, for example, the collection of the Edicts of Pacification and the Edicts of Nantes, the works of Pajon, D'Huisseau, and Claude.³⁵ Now, Locke returned to the reading of a swelling pamphlet production encouraged by current events and whose authors had also found asylum in the *milieu* of intellectuals and Dutch publishers.³⁶ Locke's ample and rich reading during these Dutch years—in theology, medicine, politics, philosophy, scholarship, natural sciences, geography, travel books, literature, etc.³⁷—can be seen by the two inventories of his library written in 1686 and again not long before leaving Holland

³⁴ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8. Furthermore, Locke sent some volumes of Crell and Cappel to his friend Tyrrell. Ms. Locke, f. 8, 75. On the relevance of these Lockian readings, see J. Marshall, *John Locke*, pp. 330ff.; W. M. Spellman, *John Locke and the Problem of Depravity* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1988), Chap. 5.

³⁵ John Lough, "Locke's Reading during his Stay in France (1675–79)," *The Library* 8 (1953), pp. 229–58; Idem, *Locke's Travels in France 1675–1679* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

³⁶ On the French environment frequented by Locke and his readings in France, besides the works of J. Lough cited in Note 35, see Charles Bastide, *John Locke, ses théories politiques et leur influence en Angleterre* (Paris, 1909), Chap. 5; Idem, "Locke et les Huguenots," *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 62 (1913), pp. 60–2; Gabriel Bonno, *Les relations intellectuelles de Locke avec la France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), Chap. 3; John Locke, *Lettre sur la Tolérance* ed. R. Klibansky, trans. R. Polin (Montréal: Mario Casalini, 1964). See also C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, H. Bots, P. G. Hoftijzer and O. S. Lankhorst, eds. *Le magasin de l'Univers. The Dutch Republic as the Centre of the European Book Trade* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).

³⁷ The following are also not lacking: the Roman and Greek classics (among which Pliny, Cicero, and Seneca are found in the Lipsius and Gronovius editions) and the principal English and French philosophers from Bacon to Boyle and Descartes to Malebranche. See John Harrison and Peter Laslett, *The Library of John Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

and in the long lists of books that fill the pages of the *Journals* and which are illuminated by brief comments, entries of lent and borrowed volumes, of works sent to friends, travel dates, changes of residence and payments effected.³⁸

Section 3: Religious Movements and Heretical Sects

With curiosity and surprise, therefore, Locke deepened his study of Remonstrant thought. In fact, he does not seem to have acquired a knowledge of the works of Arminius even though the latter had directly enlivened English theological debate—on such questions as the nature of predestination, salvation, and the freedom of God and of Man—through his polemics with Puritan theologian William Perkins and, indirectly, through the mediation of authors who recognized themselves as being in the current of “English Arminianism.” (This “English Arminianism” contained a variety of strands, ranging from anti-dogmatism towards Calvinism to vaguely sceptical positions which are not strictly derived from the teachings of the theologian from Leiden).³⁹ Exactly on some of the issues most dear to Locke and Limborch in these years—for example, toleration and the relationship between political and ecclesiastical power—the position of the English Arminians was opposed to that of such Remonstrants as Limborch.⁴⁰

Limborch not only became Locke’s companion for long conversations during the anxious months⁴¹ in which ambassador Skelton was taking extradition measures against Locke, but also acted as an intermediary between Locke and his friends and acquaintances in order to keep Locke’s residence a secret.⁴² Limborch, who was nearly

³⁸ Beyond the book inventories in BO, Ms. Locke, b. 2, 43ff. and Ms. Locke, b. 2, 85ff., see Ms. Locke, f. 7–10.

³⁹ N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists. The Rise of English Arminianism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Spellman, *John Locke*, Chap. 1.

⁴⁰ See the always useful studies of W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England. From the Accession of James I to the Convention of The Long Parliament (1603–1640)* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1936), pp. 129ff.

⁴¹ Locke to Limborch, summer 1685 (?), in *The Correspondence*, 2:724–5.

⁴² Limborch evokes again: “. . . literas amicorum omnes ad me mitti voluit, et per me sibi tradi, ne ullo modo honestae illius latebrae detegerentur: meae fidei testamentum suum, et alia quaedam pretiosiora credidit, nominaque proxime consanguineorum scripto tradidit, quibus, si quid ipsi humanitus eveniret, indicarem quicquid fidei meae commiserat.” Limborch to Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham,

the same age as Locke, was in the prime of his intellectual life. After his youthful reflections on the theme of toleration against the Calvinist Sceperus⁴³ and the writing of a history of the Synod of Dordrecht, Limborch brought to completion the task of publishing the doctrines of the Remonstrant fathers: *Epistolae Ecclesiasticae et Theologicae*⁴⁴ by Arminius and other principal exponents of Arminianism, some collections of sermons and orations of Episcopius and of Courcelles, and, in particular, the powerful volumes of their main theological works.⁴⁵

The interest which both thinkers had maintained since their youth for political-religious questions cemented their friendly companionship. They shared a rational and anti-sectarian approach towards historical and exegetical questions and towards doctrinal questions regarding, especially, the freedom of man in the face of reward and punishment, the centrality of the figure of Christ, and the theme of salvation. For both thinkers, these were the years in which their reflections—on the freedom of conscience and worship, on the freedom of judgment in the sphere of ethics and religion, on the question of toleration, and on the political implications of resisting tyrannically-held power in the face of individual religious duty—matured.

Furthermore, it is worth emphasizing that a remarkable amount of attention was paid by the Remonstrant circle and Limborch to the advancing of a rational, anti-fanatical, anti-tyrannical view of Christianity such as that of the English latitudinarians and neo-Platonists,⁴⁶ the Socinians,⁴⁷ and the French Protestants.⁴⁸ Some the-

24 March, 1705, UBA, Ms. D.III.16, 54. See the Appendix to this essay, Letter No. 2.

⁴³ Limborch, *Korte Wederlegginge van 't boexken onlangs uygegeven by Iacobus Sceperus genaemt Chrysopolerotus* (Amsterdam, 1661).

⁴⁴ Ph. van Limborch and Ch. Hartsoecker, eds., *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologiae varii argumenti, inter quas eminent eae, quae a J. Arminio, C. Vorstio, S. Episcopio, H. Grotio, C. Barlaeo conscriptae sunt* (Amsterdam, 1669).

⁴⁵ Barnouw, *Philippus van Limborch*, p. 144.

⁴⁶ R. L. Colie, *Light and Enlightenment. A Study of the Cambridge Platonists and the Dutch Arminians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957) and L. Simonutti, "Reason and Toleration: Henry More and Philip van Limborch," in S. Hutton, ed., *Henry More (1614-1687). Tercentenary Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), pp. 201-18.

⁴⁷ See the epistolary exchange between Limborch, Crell, and Wiszowaty (descendants of *Fraterum Polonorum*) kept in UBA and the edition of the works of Przypkowski, *Cogitationes sacrae ad initium Evangelii Matthaei et omnes epistolas apostolicas nec non tractatus varii argumenti praecipue de jure Christiani magistratus*, ([Eleutheropoli], Amsterdam, 1692).

⁴⁸ Bastide, *John Locke*, Chap. 5; and the Introduction of R. Klibansky, in John Locke, *Lettre sur la Tolérance*.

oretical affinities between Socinian and Arminian ideas on freedom and rationality in religion had been stressed by theologians since the times of Arminius, Vorst, and Episcopius. Limborch himself corresponded with some young Socinians staying in Holland or residing in nearby German cities⁴⁹ (which is the case with Samuel Crell and Andreas Wiszowaty). Even more significant is the relationship which Limborch had with Andreas Wiszowaty's father, Benedictus Wiszowaty. In March, 1682, the latter sent Limborch a catalog of the printed and manuscript works of the Socinian Samuel Przypkowski, Michele Servetus' preface to *Dialogorum de Trinitate libri duo*, and pertinent information on a manuscript volume of *Colloquium Racoviense anno 1601* and on its curator Valentinus Smalcus. For his part, Limborch would follow with care Przypkowski's edition of *Cogitationes sacrae* finally published in Amsterdam in 1692. Limborch examined carefully such issues as the privileged role of religion in the teaching of morality, the increased importance of the believer's commitment to the Good, and the reduction of dogmatic apparatus through the use of rational analysis. On the other hand, he was opposed to Socinian criticism of the dogmas of the Trinity, the punishment of sin, and the reward of salvation: to question these dogmas, in his opinion, would have invalidated the foundations of Christianity. However, Limborch agreed entirely with Socinian conceptions of the relationship between the different civil and ecclesiastic powers, the defense of man's original freedom in the face of political power, and the affirmation of toleration as the only instrument useful for maintaining a functioning society.

Moreover, the Remonstrants were admiring readers of the works of the Huguenots (a significant corresponding example is that of Louis Cappel who sought Grotius' approval to publish *Critica sacra*)⁵⁰

⁴⁹ W. J. Kühler, *Socinianisme in Nederland* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff's Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1912); L. Simonutti, *Arminianesimo e tolleranza*, pp. 30–6. The interest of Limborch in Socinianism are testified by the large collection of Socinian works listed in his library. See Philippus van Limborch, *Catalogus Librorum* (Amsterdam, 1712).

⁵⁰ For a brief exposition on the relationship between Arminian and Huguenot theology (and their affinity and differences), see François Laplanche, *L'Écriture, le Sacré et l'Histoire. Erudits et politiques protestants devant la Bible en France au XVII^e siècle* (Amsterdam, Maarssen: APA-Holland University Press, 1986), pp. 334–44. An *a posteriori* proof of an affinity on matters of religion and politics is found in the writings of Prosper Marchand, see C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, "La tentation de l'arminianisme," in M. Magdelaine, M. C. Pitassi, R. Whelan, A. McKenna, eds., *De l'Humanisme aux Lumières, Bayle et le protestantisme. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Élisabeth Labrousse* (Paris: Universitas; Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996), pp. 219–29.

who provided "refuge" for the religiously persecuted in the doctrine of the "Regnum Libertatis":⁵¹

Legi ante aliquot annos libellum Gallicum, Salmurii editum hoc titulo, La reunion du Christianisme. Laudatam sane operam in tractatu isto autor posuit: mirati hic fuimus in homine Gallo, qui inter Reformatos ministerio fungi dicebatur, tantam aequitatem et moderationem.⁵²

In a letter to Le Clerc from 1681, Limborch emphasized an intellectual affinity with Huguenot thinkers which had less to do with Biblical exegesis than with the defense of "dissentendi libertas salva pace Christiana." Arminians and Huguenots shared the distinction between essential and non-essential dogmas of faith and the desire (albeit arrived at through different theological political processes) to erect a doctrine of toleration as a common point of agreement for all religions. The correspondence between Limborch and two eminent representatives of liberal Francophone Protestantism during the 1680's turns out to be significant—the Frenchman Pierre Allix was a refugee minister in England after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Genevan Jean Le Clerc chose the Remonstrants and Amsterdam as his definitive asylum after spending some years in France. Amongst rigorous reflections on exegesis and Biblical interpretation and on some of the more controversial theological questions such as the Trinity, the figure of Christ, the value of prophecy, and the historicity of sacred texts in the epistolary exchange of these authors, there emerges a forceful criticism of predestination and rigid Calvinistic dogma, the search for common ground for all believers, and, above all, the defense of religion from the perils of sectarianism and fanaticism. They were unanimous in their opinion that a doctrine of toleration, based upon an anti-tyrannical and liberal political system, was necessary in order to avoid the destruction of the Christian religion and a subsequent atheist resurgence.⁵³

If Locke limited himself to being one who merely appreciated the

⁵¹ L. Simonutti, *Arminianesimo e tolleranza*, p. 68. For some brief references on Huguenot "Refuge," see M. Magdelaine, R. von Thadden, eds., *Le Refuge huguenot* (Paris: A. Colin, 1985), Chap. 4.

⁵² L. Simonutti, *Arminianesimo e tolleranza*, p. 75.

⁵³ See the Allix-Limborch correspondence in UBA and L. Simonutti, *Arminianesimo e tolleranza*, and Le Clerc's *Epistolario*. The large collection of Huguenot works and pamphlets that Limborch kept in his library is, indeed, remarkable. See Limborch, *Catalogus Librorum*.

irenian ideas of Pierre Allix,⁵⁴ he also became a friend and collaborator of Le Clerc's on the latter's scholarly journal *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*. The appearance of Le Clerc's *Sentimens de quelques theologiens de Hollande*,⁵⁵ in which Le Clerc attacked the historical and exegetical work of Richard Simon (but mostly in which he deployed his weapons of philological criticism and his doubts about the inspiration of sacred texts), was the occasion for Locke and Limborch to further their own critical reflections on these issues. Locke expressed concern that if the argument was not analyzed carefully, with moderation, it would lead to the "end of all religion." He continued:

If everything in holy writ is to be considered without distinction as equally inspired by God, then this surely provides philosophers with a great opportunity for casting doubt on our faith and sincerity. If, on the contrary, certain parts are to be considered as purely human writings, then where in the Scriptures will there be found the certainty of divine authority, without which the Christian religion will fall to the ground? What criterion will there be, or what measure?⁵⁶

He wouldn't respond to these recurring questions in his thought⁵⁷ until the writing of *Reasonableness of Christianity* after he had first taken into consideration the reflections of Limborch, of the Remonstrants' minimalist dogma, of his wide reading of Socinian works (which he had had opportunity to discuss in Dutch milieus of religious dissenters such as Limborch and the Quaker, Furly), and of English Unitarians whose acquaintance he made upon his return to England.⁵⁸

Le Clerc, after having read critical surveys of Locke found in letters directed to Limborch (to which Le Clerc would reply in *Defense des Sentimens de quelques theologiens de Hollande*),⁵⁹ met Locke in the winter of 1685–6 by virtue of Limborch's intervention. Le Clerc—probably recalling meetings at the home in Paris of the Huguenot Henry Justel⁶⁰—later recounted that Locke became one of the principal

⁵⁴ In Locke's library there are found numerous works of Pierre Allix. See Harrison and Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*.

⁵⁵ Amsterdam, 1685.

⁵⁶ Locke to Limborch, 26 September, 1685, in *The Correspondence*, 2:748–9.

⁵⁷ See, for example, the notes taken by Locke during the Holland years entitled *Propheta and Prophetia*. BO, Ms. Locke, c. 33, 26–28.

⁵⁸ See also Marshall, *John Locke*. Chaps. 8–10. See also Spellman, *John Locke*, Chap. 6.

⁵⁹ Amsterdam, 1686.

⁶⁰ See the suggestions of Bastide, *John Locke*, Chaps. 3 and 5; and especially the studies of G. Bonno, *Les relations intellectuelles de Locke*, pp. 42ff.; and *Lettres inédites de*

enliveners of the medical-confessional circle of Limborch and Guenellon and that Locke:

desir'd that Mr. Limborch, and I, and some other Friends would set up Conferences, and that to this end we should meet together once in a Week, sometimes at one House and then at another, by turns; and that there should be some Question propos'd, of which every one should give his Opinion at the next Meeting.⁶¹

The relevance of the collaboration between Locke and Le Clerc for the reception of the philosopher's works on the continent is well-known. Nevertheless, it is worth underscoring the fact that, for Locke, it constituted a view of the *Réfuge* culture, of the political-religious debates of not only French, but Dutch and English liberal Protestantism, as well as a bridge to theologians, polemicists, printers, and to intellectual emigrants in Holland (some of whom would become translators of his works and his close collaborators, such as Pierre Coste and Desmaizeux).⁶² Through articles and reviews that regularly appeared in *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (of which he was editor), Le Clerc contributed both to giving voice to the Huguenot position and, more generally, to the widespread modern debate concerning the origins of power, the rights and limits of the sovereign's power, and the liberty of conscience and political liberty. The writings which constituted this debate, often printed anonymously in Holland with fictional printing places, illustrated the unification between Protestant theorizing and theorizing concerning political doctrines present in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century on the origins of power and the state, on toleration and liberty of conscience, and on civil government. The *Journals* testify to the accurate and systematic reading which Locke reserved for Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque*, the Leipzig *Acta eruditorum*, Bayle's *Nouvelles del République des Lettres* and the *Journal des Savans*—journals that he would regularly add to his library. Locke's interest in the Huguenots' published works dates from his years spent in France,⁶³ when he found indulged in the reading of the works of

Le Clerc à Locke, Introd. and ed. by G. Bonno (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959).

⁶¹ Le Clerc, *The Life and Character*, p. 14.

⁶² Margaret E. Rumbold, *Traducteur huguenot. Pierre Coste* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991) and Bonno, *Les relations intellectuelles de Locke*. See in this context the French translation of Locke's *Du gouvernement civil* (Amsterdam: Abraham Wolfgang, 1691) by the Huguenot thinker David Hazel.

⁶³ Besides the works of Bonno, Lough, and Klibansky, see esp. Mario Montuori, *John Locke, On Toleration and the Unity of God* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1983).

Claude, Jurieu, Aubert de Versé, Allix, Maimbourg, Abbadié, and Pierre Bayle.⁶⁴

Locke didn't limit his interests to these religious movements but also extended his curiosity to other groups of dissidents and minor sects which found security in liberal Holland. At the end of July, 1684, perhaps compelled by the reading of a work of Richard Simon on the doctrines and customs of the Levant nations,⁶⁵ he assisted in a religious service performed in the Armenian tongue by the Amsterdam Christian Armenian community. Locke described the religious vestments, the religious ceremony, and then emphasized that the imposing ritual did not prevent them from admitting "to their communion all Christians and hold it [their] duty to joyn in love and charity with those who differ in opinion."⁶⁶

During a voyage in some regions of the country, and probably prompted by the curiosity of his friend and correspondent Lady Masham, Locke did not miss the opportunity to visit Wieuwerd (a village near Leeuwarden) which hosted a renowned community of Labadists. Having grown up in a neo-Platonic and latitudinarian environment in Cambridge, Lady Masham combined the education in philosophy which she received from her father with her keen interest in Lockean philosophy.⁶⁷ In the 1684–5 letters which she sent to Locke, she emphasized the legitimacy of the ethical-mystical component of philosophical-theological thought and asked her friend about the Protestant brothers—the Labadists—whose way of life, religious ideas, and social organization she had heard praised.⁶⁸ Even

⁶⁴ See BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 37, 40–41, 97, 107, 175, 289, 291, 294. In particular, on Pierre Bayle, see Ms. Locke, f. 8, 294–296 and Ms. Locke, f. 9, 330.

⁶⁵ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 97–98. Richard Simon, *Histoire critique de la créance et des coutumes des nations du Levant, publiée par le Sr. de Moni* (Francfort, 1684).

⁶⁶ BO, Ms. Locke, f. 8, 100–103:103. See also Lord King, *The Life of John Locke, with Extracts from his Correspondence, Journals, and Common-place Books* (London 1829), pp. 160–1.

⁶⁷ Simonutti, "Damaris Cudworth Masham: una Lady della Repubblica delle Lettere"; Hutton, "Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham: between Platonism and Enlightenment."

⁶⁸ Damaris Masham writes: "I desire therefore that you will tell me what their Manner of living is; and Whether it be that, or any Peculiar Principle, or Opinion, in their Religion which Unites them together; What that is; Whether they be Learn'd, or Unlearn'd; and whether in their Lives, and Conversation one amongst Another they do really differ from the rest of the World, and do appeare to have more true Honesty amongst them." Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Locke, 16 June 1684, in *The Correspondence*, 2:620–1. See also Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Locke, 8 October 1684, in *The Correspondence*, 2:639, and Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Locke, 14 August 1685, in *The Correspondence*, 2:727.

though he complied with Lady Masham's wishes by sending her some Labadist writings,⁶⁹ Locke manifested his scepticism about a confessional sect which emphasized zeal and submission at the expense of rationality and the liberty of its members. On 22 August, 1684, after having spent the day in the Wieuwerd community, he wrote a detailed account of the community's rules which permitted no private property and which placed all religious and social discipline into the hands of the minister, Yvon. Acknowledging the purity of heart among the sect's believers, Locke, nevertheless, points out the anomaly existing between their strong mystical-religious feeling and the role of *dominum factotum* which their spiritual guide, minister Yvon, had reserved for himself:

... Mr. Yvon, who, if I mistake not, has established to himself a perfect empire over them. For though both officers, their censures, and all their administration be in appearance in their church, yet it is easy to perceive how at last it determines in him.⁷⁰

Section 4: Reason, Toleration and Religion

Before leaving Amsterdam to go to the Furlly house in Rotterdam (where he would spend many serene months surrounded anew by dissident friends, Quakers, Republicans, and Huguenots who gathered at the learned merchant's⁷¹ house), Locke's habit of going to *Collegium* meetings were again interrupted by travel. Induced by political events in England and by his visits to other dissident circles,⁷² Locke sojourned in Utrecht during the winter of 1684–5 and the autumn of 1686. Equally compelled by the necessity of finding a new refuge, he spent some weeks in Cleves in the autumn of 1685. To his friends' questions about the reasons which caused him to leave Amsterdam, he responded that it was the desire to find tranquil repose from his travels and anxieties in the "calm and clear air" of these country towns. In spite of these assertions, he didn't succeed in dispelling for his friends some perplexity and a certain

⁶⁹ BO, Locke Ms. f. 8, 105.

⁷⁰ BO, Locke Ms. f. 8, 114–121: 115. See also King, *The Life of John Locke*, pp. 162–3.

⁷¹ William I. Hull, *Benjamin Furlly and Quakerism in Rotterdam* (Lancaster, Penns.: Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, 1941), Part 1, Chap. 4.

⁷² See Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, passim.

mystery.⁷³ The sojourn in Cleves, suggested by some acquaintances but hotly advised against by Limborch and by friends of the *Collegium*,⁷⁴ ended sooner than intended with Locke's return to Amsterdam, and to Veen's house, under the alias of Dr. van der Linden.

Nevertheless, the weeks spent in Cleves were for Locke a period of intense work. In his letters to Limborch, he pondered some doubts advanced by Le Clerc in particular on the eleventh and the twelfth letter of *Sentimens de quelques théologiens* in which the author affirmed that the Scriptures and the Evangelicals are true even though they are in general fallible and not necessarily inspired.⁷⁵ In these critical remarks which, as has been seen before, formed the background to Locke's first meeting with Le Clerc, Locke unites himself with Limborch and the scandalized theologian's chorus of disapproval. But what was most important to him during the autumn months spent in the hospitable country town of Cleves was probably the final revision of *Epistola de Tolerantia*. A passage from a letter from Limborch sent to Locke in September, 1685 demonstrates the intensity of their intellectual exchange:

When I reread your scholarly observations on my treatise on the Church I deeply regret that your departure deprived me of the opportunity of submitting the rest, notably my reply to the Jew, to your discerning scrutiny and fine judgement. What I seek in vain to achieve by hard labour is supplied to you without trouble by your profound learning and natural aptitude. Meanwhile I am deeply grateful for your careful criticisms; and my debt, I declare, will be doubled if the work which you permitted me to read should some time see the light after receiving the finishing touch from your hand.⁷⁶

While Locke was writing his *Epistola*, he was carefully reading, and probably had brought with him to his refuge in Cleves, parts of two

⁷³ Locke maintained his reserve even to his host. Twenty years later, Lady Masham was still curious and in the letter to Limborch, 17 September, 1705, she writes: "Dans ce que vous avez eû la bonté de me dire sur la maniere dont nôtre Ami passoit son temps lorsqu'il étoit hors de l'Angleterre il y a un endroit sur lequel j'auvois souhaité que vous vous fussiez expliqué d'avantage. Je veux dire que vous m'eussiez appris quelles étoient ces promesses qui l'engagerent à aller à Cleves et par qui elles lui furent faites: car je ne sai rien de tout de cela." Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham to Limborch, UBA, Ms. M. 31. c.

⁷⁴ See the letter of Limborch to Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham, 6 April, 1706, UBA, Ms. D.III.16, 55v; published in the Appendix to this essay as Letter No. 3.

⁷⁵ Le Clerc, *Sentimens de quelques théologiens*, pp. 230ff.

⁷⁶ Limborch to Locke, 21 September 1685, in *The Correspondence*, 2:743-4.

writings that Limborch was finishing and correcting: *Theologia Christiana*⁷⁷ and *De veritate Religionis Christianae amica collatio cum erudito judaeo*.⁷⁸ At the urging of several scholars, Limborch had begun writing *Theologia Christiana*⁷⁹ in the winter of 1681–2. Even in the richness of the works and the teachings of the fathers of Arminianism, there was, nevertheless, lacking a practical-theoretical systemization of the Remonstrants' doctrine. In writing the doctrinal *corpus*, Limborch hadn't neglected to dwell upon several questions which had divided the rigid Calvinists from the Remonstrants for decades while distancing himself and the Remonstrants from Spinozian, Socinian, and other sectarian concepts which detractors had long associated with Remonstrants. Limborch's definitive work of Remonstrant doctrine was finally published in 1686. It is significant that Limborch reserved the four final chapters⁸⁰ (enough material, in itself, almost to make up a pamphlet) on the analysis of the problem of the punishability of heretics and of the foundation and definition of toleration.

If a moral and a spiritual sentence must be passed on idolators and individuals who deny the principles of religion, then for dissenters it seemed necessary to guarantee the liberty of conscience and the installation of a mutually tolerant regime of Christians. Gathering inspiration from the history of the church and from the works of reformers, Limborch demonstrated the union which exists between tyrannical power and religious persecution. Regarding political power, Limborch argued that the sovereign had no jurisdiction in religious matters or in the salvation of souls. Its only proper sphere—and there in a limited way—was the governing of civil society. Without holding fast this distinction, one falls yet again into coercion of conscience and religious persecution. The separation between the two powers, political and ecclesiastic, would not render a crime or sin unpunishable, but would guarantee a justice exempt from malice and in accord with reason. Nor would this mean in any way the dissolution of civil power.

From the doctrinal point of view, the reflections of Limborch on the distinction between fundamental dogmas for the salvation of souls

⁷⁷ Limborch, *Theologia Christiana ad praxin pietatis ac promotionem pacis Christianae unice directa* (Amsterdam, 1686).

⁷⁸ Limborch, *De veritate Religionis Christianae, amica collatio cum erudito judaeo* (Gouda, 1687).

⁷⁹ Simonutti, *Arminianesimo e tolleranza*, pp. 81–2.

⁸⁰ Limborch, *Theologia Christiana* Book VII, Chaps. 20–3, pp. 888–916.

and dogmas that are non-fundamental but useful for Christian *pietas*, remain basic.

Hic quatuor tractabimus: 1. Fundamenti loco discrimen inter articulos ad salutem absolute necessarios, aliosque non necessarios, adstruimus. 2. Docebimus ex quibus indiciis articulus necessarius a non necessario dignosci debeat. 3. Inter dissentientes in articulis non necessariis, mutuam colendam esse tolerantiam. 4. Qua ratione tolerantia illa, salva unicuique prophetandi libertate, coli, omnisque in Ecclesia nihilominus confusio vitari, veritasque conservari possit.⁸¹

The transgression of fundamental dogmas—very limited numerically but clearly expressed by the sacred texts—must lead to an estrangement from the religious community but dissent regarding non-fundamental dogmas imposes, on the contrary, the establishment of a relationship of mutual toleration—both between individuals and between churches—in order to comply with the moral imperative of achieving union and peace among Christians. That toleration doesn't lead to scepticism and indifference or constitute a peril for the "libertas prophetandi" for religion or the church is demonstrated by, adds Limborch, the self-same Remonstrant community.⁸²

Quaerenti tibi, vir clarissime, quit extimem de mutua inter Christianos tolerantia, breviter respondeo, hoc mihi videri praecipuum verae ecclesiae criterium.⁸³

The illustrious friend's query that Locke proposes to answer in the pages of his *Epistola* appears much more than a rhetorical device. This work, which was warmly supported by, and dedicated to, Limborch, was not lacking in references to Remonstrant circles.⁸⁴ To set the right limit between church and state, to follow the moral dictates of reason and the rules of reason is, in the eyes of Locke, the only way to maintain a peaceful, free, orderly, and tolerant society. The theoretical outline and the conclusions of the two works—the final chapters of *Theologia* and *Epistola de Tolerantia*—remain different, one directed at theological problems and one at civil problems; nevertheless, they both proceed in rationally constructing the pre-suppositions of toleration and in decreeing its necessity in both the religious and the political spheres.

⁸¹ Limborch, *Theologia Christiana*, Book VII, Chap. 21, § I, p. 898.

⁸² Limborch, *Theologia Christiana*, Book VII, Chap. 23, §§ VII–IX, pp. 914–5.

⁸³ Locke, *Epistola de Tolerantia*, in M. Montuori, *John Locke, On Tolerance*, p. 6

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 147–73.

In the following years, during Locke's stay in Rotterdam and after his return to England, their correspondence would accompany, in a reciprocally critical exchange, the composition of their writings and their successive published works. From the volume in which Limborch analyzes the conversations with Orobio de Castro and the one in which Locke supplied critical advice about the edition of *Historia Inquisitionis* that he wanted Limborch to prepare, there are signs of this collaboration.⁸⁵ In this way, if Limborch had a determining role in publishing the *Epistola*, he would also be a careful reader of the successive replies by Proast, of the writings on Christian religion, and of *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. After Locke had left Amsterdam, the rapport between the two authors was not weakened, even if the ethical-religious aspects of one's thought and the philosophical-gnosiological aspects of the other's would progressively mark the distinction in their intellectual evolution.⁸⁶

APPENDIX

Three Letters on John Locke

The full transcription from the original manuscript of Limborch's letters to Lady Masham concerning Locke, is here presented. Some extracts of these letters are quoted in: Abr. Des Amorie van der Hoeven, *De Joanne Clerico et Philippo a Limborch Dissertationes duae* (Amsterdam,

⁸⁵ See L. Simonutti, "Limborch's *Historia Inquisitionis*: an episode in the pursuit of toleration", in A. P. Coudert, S. Hutton, R. H. Popkin, eds., *Judaean-Christian Intellectual Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998), pp. 245–264.

⁸⁶ One example is given in the correspondence which accompanied the revisions to the first edition of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. See L. Simonutti, "Considerazioni su 'power' e 'liberty' nel *Saggio sull'intelletto umano* secondo un manoscritto di Coste", *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 68 (2, 1984), pp. 179–199. In particular, some definitions—of the concepts of power, will, and liberty at the end of Chapter 21 of Book II of the *Essay*—were to become the object of a controversy which runs through the letters exchanged between Locke and Limborch from 1700 through 1702. In the course of this confrontation, the position adopted by Limborch remains linked to the rationalistic Erasmian tradition and the problems left on the field by the Socinians and latitudinarians and their more ancient predecessors, the Pelagians and Molinists. In contrast to Limborch, Locke, in the *Essay*, was committed to disengaging the theoretical analysis of the concepts of liberty and power from the moral-theological sector and in founding these concepts upon principles expressed in his gnosiological and epistemological thought.

1843), pp. 47–8; and in H. R. Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke*, 2 vols. (London, 1876), 2: 6. I wish to thank Mr. Bjimann, Head of the Manuscripts Department of the University Library of Amsterdam for his permission to reproduce these letters here and for his kindness and help.

Letter No. 1

Philippus van Limborch to Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham
Amsterdam, 28 November, 1704

University Library, Amsterdam, Ms. D.III.16, 53

Dominae Masham

Honoratissima Domina,

Subitus et inexpectatus de morte viri praestantissimi mihique amicissimi et quoad vivam grata semper memoria celebrandi Joannis Lockii nuntius, non leviter me perculit. Quamvis enim extrema ejus senectus, fractae jam a pluribus annis vires, et afflicta valetudo, obitum ejus brevi instantem exspectare jusserint; nihilominus quamdiu debile viri vira dignissimi corpusculum morbo non intestatur, fragilitatis humanae vitio, quo quicquid ardentem desideramus facile credimus, mortem adere propinquam, vix nobis imaginari potuimus. Virum amissimus, non tantum amicissimum candidum, sincerum, pium, ac vere Christianum, sed et patriae ac Ecclesiae quoad vixit utilissimum; cujus virtutes, animique ac ingenii debet multi quidem venerantur at paucis pro meritis aestimare possunt; soli qui propiore ipsi amicitia ac familiaritate juncti fuerunt, animumque ejus intime perspectum habuerunt niveum sinceri pectoris candorem, summam ingenii sagacitatem, aere judicium, omnium, etiam tardioris ingenii, captui sese accommodandi facilitatem, indefessum veritatem investigandi studiosum, et levem non idem secum sentientium tolerantiam, non sine admiratione viderunt, quantusque vir fuerit prae aliis agnoscunt. Ego non in minima faelicitatis mia parte duco, cum tanto viro arctam ac nunquam interruptam contraxisse amicitiam, gloriaeque mihi semper ducam inter Johannis Lockii amicos numerari. Licet famae tanti viri obtrectatores scriptis ejus, omni laude ac aeternitate dignis, invidiam creare voluerint; eorum tantum merita grata agnoscet posteritas, doctrinamque Christiano homine dignam et Servatoris nostri

praeceptis convenientem exosculabitur; et ubi contradicendi ardor deserebit summa in veneratione habebit. Requiescit nunc in pace a laboribus suis, et opera sequuntur eum. Ignosces, Honoratissima domina, quod continere me non potuerim, quin accepto de morte tanti amici nuntio, animum meum coram te, cui merita viri optime cognita sunt, estuderim. Ultimam ante tres circiter menses ab ipso epistolam accepi: cui respondere meditabari et jam respondissem, nisi gravi isto, quem filium meum Tibi retulisse credo, ne periculoso a paroxysmo impeditus fuisset. Nunc unum Te oro. Scripsi plures ad D. Lockium epistolas, ea qua inter amicos docetur familiaritate, quas in manus alienas incidere, et sparsim temere oberare nolim. Si quaedam illarum asservatae sint, rogo, ut aut Tibi, aut filio tuo eas serves: vestrae eas fidei committo, et in vostra amicitia secutus ero. Si in alienas incidunt manus, nescio quid forte alii, aut in D. Lockii, aut mei criminationem, inde extundere conaturi sint. Vale Honoratissima Domina, cum Nobilissimo Coniuge toteque familia, ac salve ab uxore mea ac filia.

Amstelodami, 28 Novembre 1704

Honoratissimae Tuae Dignitatis
Obsequentissimus Cultor
P. a Limborch

Letter No. 2.

Philippus van Limborch to Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham
Amsterdam, 24 March, 1705

University Library, Amsterdam, Ms. D.III.16, 54

Dominae Masham

Honoratissima Domina,

Epistola tua, mihi mense Januario reddita, citius merebatur responsum, verum alia quaedam intervenerunt, ac tandem quaedam prioris invaletudinis reliquae, quae responsum hactenus retardarunt; quorum veniam solita tua benignitas, mihi concedat. Saepe de valetudine mea dubius sum. Senectus quidem mihi vegeta est ac firma. Verum malum illud inveteratum plethora me caute admodum valetudini meae attendere docet, quia crebriores jam ea producit pa-

roxysmos, qui apoplexiam (ae qua hactenus benignitas divina me praeservavit) minari videntur ante tres circiter hebdomadas denuo venae sectione illi malo occurrere necesse fuit; et ingravescente senectute tardius jam convalesco. Rheumatismum quo Te infestatam D. Clericus mihi indicavit, jam dissipatum, Teque pristinae valetudini plane restitutam spero: eam Tibi firmam ac diuturnam precor. Ex D. Clerico non sine maxima admiratione intellexi, D. Lockium anno MDCXXXII natum: ego anno illius saeculi XXXIII natus sum, ita me unum tantum annum antecessit; ex vultu totaque corporis constitutione omnes judicavimus illum integro decennio ad minimum me antecedere. Primum in viri illius eximii amicitiam aditum mihi conciliavit leaena, vi intensissimi frigoris mense Januario anni 1684 exstincta, cujus exta ut inspicerem invitavit me D. Guenellon Medicinae Doctor. Inter alios spectatores aderat D. Lockius, qui cum ex D. Guenellone me esse Theologiae inter Remonstrantes professorem audiit, me compellavit, et plures mecum de religione sermones habuit; in quibus fassus est, se longe aliam deprehendere Remonstrantium doctrinam quam hactenus crediderat, seque in multis idem cum ipsis sentire miratus est. Cum ex me audisset, collationem mihi per scripta esse cum erudito Judaeo de Veritate religionis Christianae, ejus legendae facultatem a me petiit, eaque lecta considerationes suas, doctas admodum ac ingeniosas, mihi suppeditavit, quibus multum roboris argumentis meis addidit, adeo ut me illius observationibus Collationem meam veriis in locis multum ornasse, et non pauca argumenta fortius adstruxisse gratus agnoscam. Mense Decembri ejusdem anni abiit Trajectum, ubi per quinque aut sex menses satis quiete vixit. Cum vero anno 1685, dum adhuc Trajecti degeret, nomen illius eorum quos rex Jacobus sibi tradi postulabat catalogo additum esset, ego, jussu D. Venii, datis ad eum literis, aedes ipsius, in quibus tuto lateat, obtuli, in hospitium, nemine conscio, deduxi, in solitudine illa saepius adii, et horis aliquot continuis cum ipso sermones habui: literas amicorum omnes ad me mitti voluit, et per me sibi tradi, ne ullo modo honestae illius latebrae detegerentur: meae fidei testamentum suum, et alia quaedam pretiosiora credidit nominaque proxime consanguineorum scripto tradidit, quibus, si quid ipsi humanitus eveniret, indicarem quicquid fidei meae commiserat. Mense Septembri, magnificis cujusdam hominis sollicitationibus persuasus, Cliviam concessit: sed, cum sibi tutam illic non esse commorationem deprehendit, mox inde Amstelodamum ad priores suas latebras rediit. Illa hyeme in aedibus D. Venii, me solo conscio, eximiam illam de Tolerantia epistolam

ad me scripsit, voluitque nomina nostra sub literis titulo insertis latere, quibus indicatur epistolam esse scriptam ad Theologiae Apud Remonstrantes Professorem Tyrannidis Osorem, Libertatis Amantem, a Pacis Amante, Persecutionis Osore Joanne Lockio Anglo. Postea persecutionis illo impetu defervescente e latebris suis denuo prodiit, et libere in patria nostra vixit, et cum quibusvis aperte conversatus est; et licet Roterodamum concesserit, et inde in Angliam, arctissimam tamen ab illo tempore coluimus amicitiam. Epistolas a me pro familiaritate nostra ad ipsum scriptas, si mei arbitrii forent, tuae fidei commissae fuissent, nunc quoniam audio D. King, antea mihi prorsus ignotum, esse virum egregium ac literatum, ipseque eas se fideliter asservaturum recepit, in illius fide secutus ero. Affectum quem erga me tam benevole, tam candide ac sincere testaris, grato animo exosculor. Beneficiorum filio meo praestitorum memoriam nulla aetas: facultate mihi deesse doleo, qua opere ipso quanti te amicitiamque tuam facio, testatum reddere possim. Filius meus favorem erga se tuum prolixius saepe depraedicavit seque in Anglia alteros consanguineos, imo parentes reperisse agnoscit. Matrimonium illius feliciter succedere, uxoremque illi contigisse moribus probatum non potest non mihi esse gratum. Meo iudicio praecox satis fuit illud matrimonium, et si me audivisset, non ita praecipitasset; neque nisi matura tecum et cum D. Lockio deliberatione habita, et vestra approbatione impetrata, nuptias ambivisset. Nunc, quia uxorem omnibus probatam dixit, omniaque illi fluunt ex vota, nihil est quod in matrimonio illo desiderem. Unum Te oro, ut solita tua amicitia ac benevolentia ipsum uxoremque prosequi non dedigneris. Deum precor, ut Te, Honoratissima Domina (quam non tam ob arctissimam cum D. Lockio amicitiam, et ob gratissimam Reverendi ac Doctissimi D. Doctoris Rudulphi Cudworthi parentis tui memoriam, quam ob proprias virtutes, ac vere raras animi dotes, colere ac venerari, donec spiritus hoc reget artus, unquam desinam) cum Nobilissimo Coniuge totaque familia, favore suo prosequi, omnibusque bonis salutaribus ditare dignetur. D. Clericus, qui te plurimum salvere jubet, literas tuas accepit, brevem vitae D. Lockii historiam jam confecit, quam tom. VI. suae bibliothecae selectae insertam paucas intra hebdomadas ad Te missurus est.

Amstelodami, 24 Martii 1705

Honoratissimae Tuae Dignitatis
Obsequentissimus Cultor
Philippus a Limborch

Letter No. 3

Philippus van Limborch to Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham
Amsterdam, 6 April, 1706

University Library, Amsterdam, Ms. D.III.16, 55v

Dominae Masham

Honoratissima Domina,

Silentissimum meum diuturnum adscribes justissimo meo dolori, qui me ferme consumit. Ita me afflixit inopiam filii mei casus, ut quo me vertans, vix sciam: nec hactenus quo negotia ejus evasura sint assequi possum. Longe alia ego de ipso exspectaveram. Nihil unquam in tota vita mihi tristius accidit; et vixiis quae munus metum spectant, exequendis parsum. Ita saepe placet summo verum arbitrio experiri patientiam nostram, omnibusque (quae nobis vana imaginatione palliaturum) praesidiis denudatos ad se trahere, ut spem fiduciamque nostra in ipsum solum collocemus, ab ipso toti pendamus, voluntatemque nostram illius voluntati subjiciamus. Hanc aequanimitatem, et securam in providentia ipsius acquiescentium ut mihi benignus largiatur, ardentibus precibus peto. Utinam ad optatum finem quem anxius exspecto, negotia filii mei perducantur? Sed quid lamentationibus ac gemitibus meis, summam tuam humanitatem fatigo? Condonabis parenti, et jam servi, quod in finem illius, cui plurimum debet, dolorem suum effundat; silentioque meo, alias inverecundo ignoscas. Calamum saepius arripui, sed eum e manibus excussit dolor. Nunc tandem omni ulteriore abjecta mora scribo responsum, non quale meretur epistola tua, sed quale ab homine moerore ac tristitia consumto, exspectari potest. Quod de Reverende parente tuo narras, maxima cum voluptate legi. Agnosco summum viri candorem, ac ingenuitatem, quae si in omnibus inveniretur Theologis, veritatis ac pietatis Christianae negotium sincerius ac felicius promoveretur. Deum oro ut plures illi similes excitet, non tantum in Ecclesia Anglicana, sed passim per totam Europam, quorum eruditione, pietate, candore, ac mansuetudine veritas Christiana propagetur, et pax ecclesiastica restituatur ac conservetur. Quod spectat D. Lockii iter Cliviam versus, de quo queris, quibus promissis incitatus eo concesserit, paucis dicum. Licet D. Lockius omnia amicitiae et benignitatis officia in D. Venii aedibus experiretur, tamen ingratae erant latebrae; non nisi duobus aut tribus amicis ad illum aditus

patebat. Solitudinis ipsum taedere coepi, et liberiore frui aëre desiderabat. Homo quidam, Venio mihiq̃ jam olim notus, commercium per literas habuit cum Domina Hubner, matrona Clivensi, celebri admodum, quaeque multis se negotiis politicis immiscuit, et dum Cancellarius Dankelman floruit, magna in existimatione fuit. Ille, literis aliquot ultro citroque cum ea commutatis, D. Venio persuasit, tutum ac securum D. Lockio Cliviae, si eo commigraret, fore domicilium. Dissuasi ego, et mecum D. Guenellonus, Venii gener, profectionem; quia notum mihi erat hominis illius ingenium et Thra-sonica jactantia, cujus magnifica erant promissa, sed quae plerumque destituta videramus successu. Ille tamen prolixè jactans literas Dominae Hubner, D. Venio et per Venium D. Lockio persuasit, relictis omnibus suis amicis in regionem sibi ignotam abire, ut sperata frueretur libertate. Ego cum D. D. Venio et Guenellono ipsum deduxi in scapham, quae hinc Trajectum solvit, vixque a complexu illius divelli potuimus. Dedi D. Lockio literas ad amicos meos Trajectenses ac Neomagenses, quorum promptissimis officiis tuto Cliviam pervenit. Sed paucas intra hebdomadas sibi ab homine vano ac jactabundo verba data esse cognovit, quare mox inde Amstelodamum reversus, priores suas latebras repetiit et ne detegeretur nomine doctoris van der Linden appellari voluit: et porro nobiscum familiarissime vixit. Si quae alia sunt, quae de D. Lockio, dum nobiscum fuit, scire desideras, libentissimae scribam. Vale Honoratissima Domina, et salve cum Nobilissimo Coniuge, totamque familia, a me uxore, ac filia, meque, qui Te colere ac venerari nunquam desinam, favore tuo complecti porro dignere.

Amstelodami, 6 Aprilis 1706

Honoratissimae Tuae Dignitatis
Obsequentissimum Cultorem
P. a Limborch

THEO VERBEEK

Conferring with Dick Popkin

I am not sure that I remember the first time I met Dick Popkin. It must have been in 1987 or 1988, most probably in Leiden, where I think he organized a seminar, but it may be somewhere else for at the time he organized lots of seminars and was travelling more or less permanently. In any case, many meetings followed, in the Netherlands, in the United States, in Italy, in Ireland. Last time I met him he was just recovering from a trip earlier that year to the Netherlands, which I am afraid had done him no good at all. He had been ill before he started on his journey and he became more ill on his arrival. Still, in spite of what turned out to be a pneumonia—not to mention the characteristically bad weather and the unfriendly hotel—he carried on as he will carry on, I am sure, as long as he can breathe at all. I am glad to know him and hope to enjoy his company and his comments for much longer.

SPINOZA ON THEOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

Theo Verbeek

Spinoza's discussion of theocracy in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670) is generally interpreted as being directed against Dutch Calvinist ministers. Plausible though it seems, this interpretation is not satisfactory. I argue that Spinoza's theocracy is in fact a primitive, although perhaps the only viable form of democracy; moreover, that, according to Spinoza, the Jewish state, which is his historic example for a theocracy, collapsed not because it was based on religion but because of the relations between the tribes; and, finally, that, apart from being a reaction to Hobbes, Spinoza's reconstruction of the history of the Jewish state serves as a metaphor for Dutch political history.

Section 1

Spinoza speaks of the creation of the state as the process by which people "arrange" (*efficere*) that "the unrestricted right naturally possessed by each individual should be put into common ownership, and that this right should no longer be determined by the strength and appetite of the individual but by the power and the will of all together."¹ This can be successful only if the same people "bind themselves by the most stringent pledges to be guided in all matters by the dictates of reason."² Since on the other hand nobody must

¹ TTP, Chap. 16, G 3:191 (S 239). Spinoza will be cited from the Gebhardt edition—cited as G and followed by Arabic numerals to designate the volume and page. [See Carl Gebhardt, ed., *Spinoza Opera*, 4 vols. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1925)]. Translations for the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (TTP in the notes) are taken from Shirley—cited as S and followed by the page number. [See Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, Gebhardt ed., trans. Samuel Shirley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989)]. Translations for the *Tractatus Politicus* (TP in the notes) are taken from Elwes—cited as E and followed by the page number. [See Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise; A Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951)]. All translations were checked on the original. The Bible is quoted from the King James version.

² TTP, Chap. 16, G:191 (S, 239).

be expected to give up his natural right or keep promises "except through fear of a greater evil or hope of a greater good," a man has the sovereign right to break faith if that is what he believes to be in his own interest. Accordingly, promises and pledges are not enough and, in any case, the legitimacy of the state does not depend on them. Indeed, the only relevant factor is that someone (or some group of persons) manages to impose his (or their) authority, and, inversely, that, voluntarily or involuntarily, the rest come to recognize it.³ Accordingly, as long as authority is in fact exercised it does not really matter whether the ruler be a secular leader (like the President of France) or a secular leader that is also the head of a Church (like the Queen of England) or a spiritual leader that is also a political ruler (like the Pope of Rome). At any rate, because the only conceivable reason why one should reject theocracy is that authority cannot be effectively exercised, the true question is whether in a theocracy political authority is more easily contested than under a different government. But before dealing with that question we must see what Spinoza means with "theocracy."

The historical model Spinoza has in mind is the first Hebrew state. After leaving Egypt and returning to the state of nature, the Israelites "hearkened to Moses . . . and resolved to transfer their right not to any mortal man, but to God alone."⁴ In fact, they became God's own Kingdom. However, when they appeared before God they were so terrified that they made an appeal to Moses and "transferred to him their right to consult God and to interpret His decrees."⁵ Moses became king and the Jewish state became a monarchy. If Moses' successor had had the same authority as Moses, Israel would have been an ordinary monarchy:

There would have been no difference but this, that ordinarily a monarchy is ruled in accordance with a decree of God which is hidden even from the monarch, whereas the Hebrew state would be, or should have been, ruled in a definite way by God's decree revealed to the monarch alone. This difference does not diminish the monarch's domination and right over all his subjects; on the contrary, it increases it. As for the people, in both cases they are equally subject and ignorant of

³ "To the extent that each transfers his power to another, *whether by force or voluntarily*, to that extent he also necessarily surrenders his right to him." TTP, Chap. 16, G 3:193 (S, 241)—my emphasis.

⁴ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:205–6 (S, 254–5).

⁵ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:207 (S, 256).

God's decree, for in both cases, they are dependent on what the monarch says, understanding from him alone what is right and what is wrong.⁶

The Hebrew state became "theocratic" only after Moses' death because, as Spinoza says, "the right to interpret the laws and to promulgate God's answers was vested in one man and the right to govern the state in accordance with laws thus expounded and answers thus made known in another."⁷ The priests on the other hand had no sovereign rights nor any civil rights. The rights and duties of the worldly leader remained those of a king, except that to consult God he had to rely on the priests.⁸ Finally, the soldiers of the army "swore allegiance to their religion and to God."⁹

The politically relevant characteristic of theocracy is that no one is truly sovereign: "To no one did Moses give the right to consult God in solitude and wherever he wished and therefore to no one did he give the authority he himself possessed, to make and repeal laws, to decide on war and peace, and to choose men for religious and secular office, all these being the prerogative of a sovereign."¹⁰ However, when summing up the theocratic features of the state of Israel, Spinoza adds three other features:

First, the royal seat of government was the temple, and it was only in respect of the temple that all the tribes were fellow-citizens. Secondly, all the citizens had to swear allegiance to God, the supreme judge, to whom alone they had promised absolute obedience in all things. Finally when a commander-in-chief was needed, he was chosen only by God.¹¹

This confirms what we already knew, namely, that no mortal man exercised all the rights of a sovereign. A new element, however, is that of the tribes. According to Spinoza, what emerged after Moses' death was a federation of tribes, each with their own sovereign prince.¹² Accordingly, one would say, Israel was a federation of sov-

⁶ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:207 (S, 257).

⁷ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:208 (S, 257).

⁸ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:208-9 (S, 257-9).

⁹ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:209 (S, 258).

¹⁰ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:209 (S, 258-9).

¹¹ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:211 (S, 261).

¹² "Each prince should assume control over his own part, including the right to consult God through the high priest about the affairs of his own tribe, to command his own military forces, to found and fortify cities, to appoint judges in each city, to attack the enemies of his own particular state, in short to carry out all the duties of war and peace." TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:210 (S, 260).

ereign republics. Again, none of the “princes” was truly sovereign because, apart from having to rely on a high priest also in matters that concerned his own tribe, he could be attacked by the other princes if he rebelled against God. Accordingly, no prince had the exclusive right to interpret the Law of God, either because this was a privilege of the priests or because he shared that right with the other princes.

Section 2

One would expect Spinoza to condemn this constitution because of the ambiguous position of sovereignty, but he actually concludes that it is sound. The reason is that the religious character of the state protects both parties—the leadership and the people—against the excesses of the other.¹³ No leader can transgress the law without being taken to task either by the people, or by the high priest or by the other princes.¹⁴ The people are constrained by their moral code (which they know as “the will of God” or “the Law of God”) and the priests form a professional class, whose prestige depends on the true interpretation of that same law.¹⁵ As a result, a theocratic state organized along the lines of the Jewish constitution is certainly capable of achieving stability, which in Spinoza’s language means that it has a natural right to exist.¹⁶ Indeed, the only way for a state to survive with an imperfect sovereign is as a theocracy, because only in that case the inherent weakness of the sovereign is compensated by the force of the higher principle to which both the

¹³ TTP, Chap. 18, G 3:221 (S, 272).

¹⁴ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:213 (S, 263). Moreover, prophets could take advantage of the people’s discontent and set it up against its leader, but, if the government was properly conducted, “the prince could ensure in good time that the prophet should first stand before him to be examined,” and eventually be killed, “if his signs were less than satisfactory, or his teaching innovatory.” TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:213–4 (S, 263).

¹⁵ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:212 (S, 262).

¹⁶ Spinoza admits there were three other powerful non-religious factors which increased the stability of the Jewish commonwealth: First, no prince was allowed to hire foreign mercenaries, so that the armed forces could never be used against the people nor a war fought against their will. Second, leaders came into office, not “by nobility of descent or right of birth,” but “by reason of age and virtue.” Finally, the subjects “had an equal share with the prince in lands and fields.” TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:212 (S, 262); G 3:214–6 (S, 263–5).

sovereign and his subjects voluntarily submit. As a result, the fact that eventually the state of Israel collapsed cannot be attributed to its being a "theocracy." God's punishment of Israel and the cause of its destruction was not that but the fact that the ministry was entrusted to a particular tribe—the Levites.¹⁷ If what on rather dubious evidence (Num. 8:17–8) Spinoza believes to be the original idea would have been maintained, namely, that the priesthood should befall to the first-born of every tribe, all tribes would have been equal. But now that the priests were recruited from a particular tribe and had to be maintained by the others, the tribe of Levy became unpopular and the people "forsook a worship which . . . involved their humiliation and was also the object of suspicion."¹⁸ Accordingly, the primary cause of the destruction of Israel was the way in which religion was organized. Indeed, the fact that the ministry was a tribal privilege led to a weakening of religion and consequently to a weakening of the state that made possible the advent of the kings. The kings, on the other hand, seized the opportunity to make "every concession to the people and introduce new forms of worship with a view to securing the people's favour and alienating them from the high priest."¹⁹ Accordingly, Israel became an ordinary monarchy—not a well organized one for that matter because the kings did not really manage to break the power of the priests.

This raises several questions. First of all, is theocracy something *sui generis*, alongside monarchy, aristocracy and democracy? Furthermore, if theocracy is, in principle at least, perfect government, why does not Spinoza believe that the theocracy of the Jews should be imitated? Finally, what is the relevance of the theocratic concept in the seventeenth century?

Section 3

According to Spinoza, the difference between the three political systems—monarchy, aristocracy and democracy—is primarily the number of people involved in managing the state: "If this charge belong to a council, composed of the general multitude, then the govern-

¹⁷ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:218 (S, 267).

¹⁸ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:218 (S, 268).

¹⁹ TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:218 (S, 268).

ment is called democracy; if the council be composed of certain elected people, then it is an aristocracy; and if the care of the affairs of state and consequently the government rest with one man, then it has the name of monarchy."²⁰ But if we look at details, this turns out to be far too simple.

Although in a democracy government is exercised by the multitude, all are not necessarily involved in managing the state. In the *Tractatus Politicus* Spinoza even allows for democracies with councils consisting of fewer citizens than in an aristocracy.²¹ Also, the democratic leader's right of governing depends "on some right either congenital or acquired by fortune," which may mean anything except that he is chosen.²² On the other hand, the only precise difference Spinoza explicitly says there obtains between a democracy and an aristocracy is that in an aristocracy the patricians are elected by co-optation, whereas in a democracy election takes place on the basis of a law, for example, that voting rights be given to those who attain a certain age or pay an amount of money.²³ Finally, democratic government is absolutely absolute [*omnino absolutum*].²⁴ This probably means that, whereas in monarchies and aristocracies all authority finds its limit in the readiness of the people to acknowledge it, people in a democracy have warranted the authority exercised over them beforehand, given the fact that they are themselves the source of that authority.²⁵ In any case, there is no other form of government in which authority is as unlimited:

Without infringement of any natural right, a community can be formed and a contract can always be preserved in its entirety, in absolute good faith on these terms, that everyone transfers all the power that he possesses to the community, which will therefore alone retain the sovereign natural right over everything, that is, the supreme rule which everyone will have to obey either of free choice or through fear of the ultimate penalty. Such a community's right is called a democracy,

²⁰ TP, Chap. 2, § 17, G 3:323 (E, 297).

²¹ TP, Chap. 11, § 2, G 3:358 (E, 385).

²² TP, Chap. 8, § 1, G 3:323 (E, 345).

²³ TP, Chap. 11, §§ 2–3, G 3:358–9 (E, 385–6).

²⁴ TP, Chap. 11, § 1, G 3:358 (E, 385); cf. TTP, Chap. 16, G 3:195 (S, 243).

²⁵ "Men have never transferred their right and surrendered their power so completely that they were not feared by those very persons who received their right and power, and that the government has not been in greater danger from its citizens, though deprived of their right, than from its external enemies." TTP, xvii, G 3:201 (S, 250).

which can therefore be defined as a united body of men which corporately possesses sovereign right over everything within its power. Hence it follows that the sovereign power is bound by no law, and all must obey it in all matters; for this is what all must have covenanted tacitly or expressly when they transferred to it all their power of self-defence, that is, all their right.²⁶

Accordingly, *in spite* of the fact that in a democracy the people are free, a democratic state is a perfect state because there is no limit to authority. No contradiction is involved in the idea of a group of people governing themselves, that is, obeying to their own laws.

The crucial question is, of course, whether *de facto* democracy is possible. According to Spinoza, the fundamental purpose of any state is "to avoid the follies of the appetite and to keep men within the bounds of reason."²⁷ This would imply that a democratic state is either impossible, because most people do not know the laws of reason and are unable to live in accordance with them, or unnecessary, because those who do know the laws of reason and are able to live in accordance with them do not need the state or the law to contain them within the bounds of reason. Reason is not an *imperium*.²⁸ As a result, a political democracy would be impossible (or unnecessary) unless a way could be found to make people act freely and rationally without necessarily making them think rationally. The only way to achieve this, however, is by means of religion. Religion is free and moral behaviour that is based, not on reason but on the imagination.²⁹ Accordingly, a political democracy coincides with a theocracy.³⁰ It is possible to the extent that it is possible to organize religion in such a way that it can become a factor of social cohesion. This is confirmed by Spinoza who in a discussion that takes most of Chap. 18 of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* points out that until the advent of the kings the people were actually sovereign and

²⁶ TTP, Chap. 16, G 3:193 (S, 241).

²⁷ TTP, Chap. 16, G 3:194 (S, 242).

²⁸ TP, Chap. 2, § 20, G 3:283 (E, 298), referring to §§ 7 and 11.

²⁹ For a survey of the use of "religio" and "godsdienst" see Emilia Giancotti-Boscherini, *Lexicon Spinozanum*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 2:920–8 and 1204.

³⁰ This has been noted by Sylvain Zac, "Spinoza et l'État des Hébreux," in *Philosophie, théologie et politique dans l'œuvre de Spinoza* (Paris: Vrin, 1979)—reprinted from *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* (1977), pp. 145–76; E. O. G. Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1980), p. 182. However, both Zac and Haitsma Mulier seem to think that the Jewish state was a democracy in spite of its being a theocracy, whereas I argue that a theocracy is the only possible form of a (political) democracy.

that their transference of rights to God was "notional rather than practical."³¹ In fact, "they retained their sovereignty absolutely until they transferred it to Moses, who from then on remained an absolute ruler."³² As a result, the Jews were a democracy before they transferred their rights to Moses and re-became so during the period of the Judges. On the other hand, they were a (perfect) monarchy as long as Moses was alive and an (imperfect) monarchy after the advent of Saul.

Section 4

A possible objection to this interpretation is that Spinoza thinks it neither possible nor advisable to try and imitate the constitution of Israel. He has two arguments. First, it is no longer possible to make a covenant with God because God has "revealed through His Apostles that His covenant is no longer written in ink or engraved on tablets of stone, but is inscribed by God's spirit in men's hearts."³³ Second, he believes that "this form of state might possibly meet the needs of those who intend to live for themselves alone with no external ties, shutting themselves off from the rest of the world."³⁴

Of these arguments, the second is the most obvious because it is easy to see that a certain type of religion can best be preserved in a closed society. Spinoza's first argument is based on St Paul's *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*:

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.³⁵

³¹ "It is also noteworthy that as long as the people was sovereign there was only one civil war. . . . But after the people, who were little accustomed to kings, changed the original form of their state to monarchy." TTP, Chap. 18, G 3:224 (S, 274). "As long as the people held the reins of government, the laws remained uncorrupted and were observed with greater constancy. For before the monarchy very few prophets arose to admonish the people." TTP, Chap. 18, G 3:224-5 (S, 275).

³² TTP, Chap. 19, G 3:230 (S, 282).

³³ TTP, Chap. 18, G 3:221 (S, 272).

³⁴ TTP, Chap. 18, G 3:221 (S, 272).

³⁵ 2 Cor. 3:1-3.

Earlier Spinoza had used the same passage in the following way: "Furthermore, if in accordance with the saying of the Apostle in 2 Cor. ch. 3 v. 3 they have within themselves the Epistle of God, written not with ink but with the Spirit of God, not on tablets of stone but on the fleshly tablets of the heart, let them cease to worship the letter and to show so much concern for it."³⁶ Accordingly, he uses 2 Cor. 3:1–3 to reject confessionalism, implying that any interpretation of Scripture that leads to moral behaviour is by definition right. In the present context, however, Spinoza's point is political: the Christian God refuses to be a party in a political covenant, that is, the Christian God is not the God of a particular nation.³⁷ In itself, an assembly of Christians is never a political commonwealth. Inversely, a political commonwealth never coincides with a Christian Church. Much of this will become more clear against the background of Hobbes' ideas on a Christian commonwealth, as they are presented in Part III of *Leviathan*.

Section 5

Superficially, Spinoza arrives at the same conclusion as Hobbes, namely, that "the ministers of God's word are those who are authorised by their sovereign to teach piety in the form that, by decree of the sovereign, is adapted to the public good."³⁸ Both Hobbes and Spinoza deduce their claim from general principles and from a reconstruction of the state of Israel. But whereas Hobbes concludes that there are as many churches as there are sovereigns, Spinoza rejects the notion of a church and accordingly that of a national or a state church.

According to Hobbes, a commonwealth is weakened by the ideas of those who "set up a *Supremacy* against the *Sovereignty*; *Canons* against *Laws*; and a *Ghostly Authority* against the *Civill*."³⁹ Such ideas, he believes, lead to admitting two different commonwealths consisting of

³⁶ TTP, Chap. 12, G 3:162 (S, 208).

³⁷ TTP, Chap. 3, G, Vol. 3.

³⁸ TTP, Chap. 19, G 3:236 (S, 288).

³⁹ *Leviathan*, Chap. 29, p. 171 (Ox, 253). *Leviathan* is quoted from the edition of 1651, as it was reprinted for the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1909 and many times afterwards (with an introductory essay by W. G. Pogson Smith). It is cited as "Ox" and page number.

the same subjects: "When the spiritual power moveth the members of a Common-wealth by the terrour of punishments and hope of rewards . . . otherwise than by the Civill Power . . . they ought to be moved; and by strange and hard words suffocates their understanding, it must needs thereby Distract the people and either Overwhelm the Common-wealth with Oppression or cast it into the Fire of a Civill warre."⁴⁰ As a result, the sovereign should give rules for public worship.⁴¹ Hobbes and Spinoza agree that the only authority by which God's Law can be imposed is that of the common-wealth. However, Hobbes deduces from this that there are as many Churches as there are Christian sovereigns, the sovereign being "the Sovereign Prophet [who] hath next under God, the Authority of Governing Christian men."⁴² Indeed, "when Christian men take not their Christian Sovereign for Gods Prophet, they must either take their owne Dreames for the Prophecy they mean to bee governed by, and the tumour of their own hearts for the Spirit of God, or they must suffer themselves to bee lead by some strange Prince or by some of their fellow subjects."⁴³ According to Hobbes, the expression "kingdom of God" as it is used in the Bible invariably means an earthly commonwealth or "a Kingdome properly so named, constituted by the votes of the people of Israel in a peculiar manner, wherein they chose God for their King."⁴⁴ Hobbes' crucial text is in *Exodus* 19:

Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words that thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.⁴⁵

Hobbes explains this by means of its rephrasing in the *First Epistle of St Peter*: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). The rulers of the Jewish nation are by definition priests. This was already true of Abraham (Gen. 18:18–9), but also of Moses,

⁴⁰ *Leviathan*, Chap. 29, p. 172 (Ox, 254).

⁴¹ *Leviathan*, Chap. 31, p. 192 (Ox, 283).

⁴² *Leviathan*, Chap. 36, p. 232 (Ox, 337).

⁴³ *Leviathan*, Chap. 36, p. 232 (Ox, 337).

⁴⁴ *Leviathan*, Chap. 35, p. 216 (Ox, 314).

⁴⁵ *Leviathan*, Chap. 35, p. 217 (Ox, 316).

except that Moses' authority was "grounded on the Consent of the People, and their Promise to obey him."⁴⁶ Whereas Spinoza regards the appointment of Joshua as a limitation of the power of the High Priest, Hobbes claims that the priests remained sovereign in principle until the advent of the Kings.⁴⁷ And whereas Spinoza believes that under the Kings democracy was replaced by a less perfect form of monarchical government, Hobbes believes that this did not fundamentally affect the position of sovereignty for "whereas before all authority, both in Religion and Policy, was in the High Priest, so now it was all in the King."⁴⁸ Indeed, Hobbes sees no alternative to subjecting either the Church to the King or the nation to the Priests.

Hobbes' *Leviathan* was translated into Dutch in 1666 and into Latin in 1668.⁴⁹ Moreover, the author of the Dutch translation, Abraham Theodori van Berckel (born c. 1640), was connected with Spinoza's circle of friends, in particular Adriaen Koerbagh (c. 1632–1669).⁵⁰ Finally, he published *Leviathan* in Dutch to give support to the idea that in Holland the Dutch Reformed Church should be subjected to the sovereignty of the States of Holland, in the same way apparently as the Church of England was subjected to the King of England. Accordingly, the idea that the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* is, among other things, a critical gloss on Hobbes's *Leviathan* seems likely. For although Spinoza agrees with Hobbes that the ministers of religion must be subjected to the authority of the worldly rulers, he does not think that any particular confession should be privileged.

This reading of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* leads to a reconsideration of the Orthodox Calvinist position. The Dutch Reformed Church never was a State Church but a confessionalist Church to which one belongs only after publicly subscribing to the Dutch Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the "Five Articles" against the Remonstrants. The conception of the Christian Magistrate implies that the Magistrate is always a secular person but that he has the duty to impose God's

⁴⁶ *Leviathan*, Chap. 40, p. 250 (Ox, 365–6).

⁴⁷ *Leviathan*, Chap. 40, p. 253 (Ox, 369).

⁴⁸ *Leviathan*, Chap. 40, p. 254 (Ox, 370).

⁴⁹ Cf. C. W. Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the Mind* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), pp. 46–62 and 130–1.

⁵⁰ Van Berckel assisted Koerbagh with the publication of *Een ligt schijnende in duistere plaatsen* (1668); cf. K. O. Meinsma, *Spinoza en zijn kring* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1896 (repr. Utrecht: H&S, 1980)], pp. 302–15; Louise Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme* [Amsterdam, 1954; repr. (Utrecht: H&S, 1989)], pp. 137–8; 196; and 364–5.

law.⁵¹ According to art. 36 of the *Dutch Confession* the civil authorities are an instrument of God's providence and should always be obeyed.⁵² This relation between the Church and the State is similar to that in the Jewish state as it is described by Spinoza: The priests (the theologians and ministers) have no political responsibilities but they interpret the Law (give moral guidance) for both citizens and magistrates. Accordingly, Spinoza's analysis can be read as a partial endorsement of the Calvinist theocratic concept: the notion of the Christian Magistrate is valid in a Christian context. However, this endorsement is severely qualified by Spinoza's rejection of confessionalism and, ultimately, of theology, which implies that no particular interpretation of the Christian documents should have authority. Accordingly, the Church, as an authoritarian structure watching over the purity of doctrine and morals is impossible.

The fact that Spinoza insists on the tribal structure of the Jewish nation is further evidence that Israel serves as a parable of Dutch political history. The Seven United Provinces were independent republics, whose only tie was their common language, their common history and, to a certain extent, their common religion.⁵³ The Stadholder separately governed in each of the Provinces, in the name of a king—the King of Spain—who was no longer recognized as being the sovereign. Still, the country never became a republic, because, as Spinoza aptly remarks, the Dutch abolished the king but left their constitution as it was.⁵⁴ Spinoza's analysis suggests that the position of the Stadholder must remain akin to that of Joshua, that is, that he must be the commander of the national army whenever an army is

⁵¹ Cf. D. Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration: A Study of the Disputes in Dutch Calvinism from 1600 to 1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938); R. Bisschop, *Sions vorst en volk: Het Tweede-Israëlied als theocratisch concept in de Gereformeerde kerk van de Republiek tussen ca. 1650 en ca. 1750*, Ph.D. diss., University of Utrecht, 1993.

⁵² J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenisgeschriften*, 2nd ed., (Amsterdam: Bolland, 1976), p. 141; cf. *Heidelberg Catechism*, Sunday 39, qu. 104. The Scriptural basis of this doctrine is St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*: "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?" Rom. 13:2–3. Cf. Col. 3:20; Eph. 6:4; Matt. 22:21.

⁵³ This should not be exaggerated because, according to modern estimates, less than half of the population had done confession. For a very balanced discussion, see J. J. Woltjer, "De plaats van de calvinisten in de Nederlandse samenleving," *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 10 (1994), pp. 3–23.

⁵⁴ TP, Chap. 9, § 14, G 3:352 (E, 376).

necessary.⁵⁵ In any case, William III should never try to be a king or to act as a king, not only because any king fails after a tradition of freedom and legality but also because the position of the Church will prevent him from exercising sovereign authority.⁵⁶ As a result, Spinoza's analysis can be seen as a triple warning: To William III, that his alliance with the Church will eventually turn against him; to Republicans like Van Berckel, that the only solution of their problems is not to turn the Church into a State Church but to assert the authority of the state in worldly matters; and to the Church, that their insistence on purity of doctrine is politically divisive and has the risk in it of superstition.

⁵⁵ Cf. TTP, Chap. 17, G 3:210 (S, 259).

⁵⁶ "We see how fatal it is for a people unaccustomed to the rule of kings, and already possessing established laws, to set up a monarchy. For neither will the people be able to endure such autocratic rule nor the monarch to tolerate laws and rights of the people which have been instituted by someone of inferior authority. Still less could the sovereign persuade himself to uphold these laws, since they could not have been designed to take any account of a king, but were instituted for a people or a council, which regarded itself as sovereign. So in upholding the ancient rights of the people the king would appear to be its servant rather than its master. Therefore, a newly established monarch will make every effort to introduce new laws and to reconstitute the state's legal code to his own advantage, reducing the people to a point where it will find it not so easy to abolish monarchy as to set it up." TTP, Chap. 18, G 3:226 (S, 276-7).

ARTHUR H. WILLIAMSON

Conferring with Dick Popkin

It was, I think, first at the Clark Library conference on “Jewish Christians and Christian Jews” in 1992—and off and on thereafter—that Dick asked me whether there had ever been a Judeo-English. Where had the Jews actually gone after the 1290 expulsion? What about George Buchanan and his five year stay in Portugal (two of them in jail)? All of this initially seemed remote and more than a little scattered. I can remember wanting to ask him about the Kennedy assassination at those moments.

Luckily, I eventually pursued Dick’s suggestions. Two things resulted. First, I found that during the 17th-century Scots and Jews were almost universally conflated within the English public imagination. Among other things, it was widely believed (in England) that the expelled Jews had settled in Scotland, a view supported by some fairly primitive ethnography. And even if the Scots weren’t truly Jews, many thought that they were still “a kind of Jew.” Anti-Judaism and Scotophobia often occurred together; likewise Philo-Judaism and friendly attitudes toward Scotland were frequently linked. Here had emerged a discourse for imagining Great Britain—and for rejecting it.

Secondly, it turned out that Buchanan had indeed been charged with Judaizing by the Lisbon Inquisition and that this Jewish “scandal” echoed down the centuries in Catholic polemic, eventually finding its way into Bayle. The charge seems preposterous at first, yet on inquiry there is something to it. At Bordeaux and Coimbra, Buchanan actually inhabited the New Christian/Marrano intellectual world. It is in this context that his important play, *Baptistes*, needs to be approached. It is also from this context that we can understand his oddly “secular” worldview.

Dick’s gentle questioning had led to altogether new lines of inquiry. His questions are always highly informed and enjoin exciting new ways of looking at the world.

UNNATURAL EMPIRE: GEORGE BUCHANAN,
ANTI-IMPERIALISM, AND THE
16TH-CENTURY SYPHILIS PANDEMIC*

Arthur H. Williamson

Survey the history of our settlements and commercial undertakings in Africa or in Asia, and you will see how our trade monopolies, our treachery, our murderous contempt for men of another color or creed, the insolence of our usurpations, the intrigues or the exaggerated proselytic zeal of our priests, have destroyed the respect and good-will that the superiority of our knowledge and the benefits of our commerce at first won for us in the eyes of the inhabitants. . . . So, the peoples of Europe . . . understanding their own rights too well to show contempt for those of others, will respect this independence, which until now they have so insolently violated.

Marquis de Condorcet, 1793

Ignota rostris verrimus æquora,
Gentes quietas sollicitavimus
Terrore belli, orbisque pacem
Miscuimus misero tumultu.

[We swept unknown waters with our prows;
We went after peaceful peoples
With the terror of war, and we stirred
Misery and tumult into the peace of the world].

George Buchanan, 1568 (written in the 1550s)¹

* This article was made possible by the generous support of the CSUS Committee for Research and Creative Activity. I am also most grateful to my colleague, collaborator, and friend, Professor Paul McGinnis who translated several of Buchanan's poems and drew my attention to Horace's views on seafaring. Despite conflicting priorities and leadership problems, CSUS remains at once intellectually vibrant and exceptionally large-spirited.

¹ Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, marquis de Condorcet, "Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind," in *Condorcet: Selected Writings*, ed. K. M. Baker (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), pp. 260–1; George Buchanan, "In colonias brasilienses, vel sodomitas Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam" (verse #7), in *Omnia opera*, 2 vols., ed. T. Ruddiman (Edinburgh, 1715), 2:25–6. For a detailed analysis and a complete translation of all the poems cited in this article, see Paul McGinnis and Arthur Williamson, eds., *George Buchanan. The Political Poetry, a Translation and Commentary* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1997), forthcoming.

European imperialism has always been an ambivalent affair. Almost from its outset in the late fifteenth century, the great expansion of Europe stimulated considerable argument about its purposes, its consequences (both at home and abroad), and even about the legitimacy of the entire undertaking. Yet the terms, through which the emergence of global empire was considered and disputed, only gradually assumed the shape familiar to us since the Enlightenment. Empire always involved huge debate, but in the 16th century it was one with very different foci of contention.

As Anthony Pagden has shown, the first great defender of Amerindian rights, Bartolomé de Las Casas, was the staunchest imperialist, a firm believer in the 1493 papal "donation" of the world beyond Europe to the king of Castile, an active defender of Spanish seizure of the Americas. For Las Casas, the pope was the *dominus mundi*, the spiritual lord of the world. His bulls constituted an evangelizing charter and Las Casas' commitment to the extirpation of heresy fully equaled that of the most blood-thirsty inquisitor. Las Casas never doubted the validity of the emperor's claims to universal sovereignty. If the priest's New Jerusalem in America might have proven extremely costly to the Hapsburgs, their presence there could hardly be more secure.²

By contrast Pagden has described how some of the earliest anti-imperialists—specifically the Salamancan university professors, Francisco de Vitoria (c. 1485–1546), Domingo de Soto (1494–1560), and Diego Covarrubias y Leyva (1512–1567)—were only marginally concerned with the New World. The professors had three fundamental objectives. They wanted to preclude any possible theoretical basis for the Protestant uprisings now taking place all over Europe. Simultaneously they sought to protect the sovereignty of the crown against clerical and specifically papal overlordship. And, finally, they undertook this project within a Neo-Thomist agenda: political authority

² Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 52; Pagden, "Dispossessing the Barbarian: The Language of Spanish Thomism and the Debate over the Property Rights of the American Indians," in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 80, 89–90, 95, and 96. The discussion in the following two paragraphs derives from *Lords of All of the World*, pp. 31–62; *Languages of Political Theory*, pp. 79–98; Pagden, "Heeding Heraclides: Empire and its Discontents, 1619–1812," in *Spain, Europe, and the Atlantic World*, ed. Richard Kagan and Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 316–26.

arose, they claimed, from God's law and not, as Augustinians and the "new heretics" would have it, from his grace. As a result, revolution against a putatively unchristian (i.e., Roman Catholic) monarch could have no conceivable justification. For all political authority (Christian or otherwise) derived from nature, and thus all government, they more hesitantly implied, arose from inherent human necessity. A monarch might be spiritually false and yet politically legitimate—and logically, if also by default, this circumstance necessarily extended to the Amerindian rulers of the New World. Anti-imperialism therefore initially grew out of quite immediate ecclesiastical and political needs—rather than any critique of the New World experience.

Of course the great empires were not dissolved as a result of these assertions. Nor was it intended that they should be: the professors "were largely unconcerned with the realist implications of their claims."³ This kind of argument was effective only to the extent that it enjoined some of the most contorted justifications for the Spanish conquest: perhaps the Indians had willingly subjected themselves to enslavement; perhaps they had been defeated in a just war when they resisted the universal right of travel and free passage to the conquistadors. But, however contorted, Europe, not America, was the concern. The Salamancans were broadly anti-imperial, yet, on Pagden's telling, their anti-imperialism proved derivative, almost incidental.

Even the humanist bureaucrat, Fernando Vázquez de Menchaca (1512–69), who most relentlessly pursued the professors' arguments, had considerably less impact than we might expect. For Vázquez was no more concerned with "realism" than were his academic predecessors. The point was to imagine legitimacy, not to formulate policy. If Vázquez at moments actually spoke in terms of the public good as derived from the sum of individual goods—Pagden's presentation of it making Vázquez sound almost like Jeremy Bentham—again as with the professors, the impact of such an argument was initially exceedingly limited. It is hard to imagine how it could be otherwise within the context of Vázquez's career at court. Heavily juridical, the argument hardly addressed European behavior in the New World and, like the professors, Vázquez depended on scholastic discourse: universal rule was contrary to the natural order (as well as contrary to fulfillment of the human *telos*) and therefore in "vain"—

³ Pagden, "Heeding Heraclides," p. 320.

in the end a simple inversion of Dante's claim in the *De Monarchia*.⁴

A much more direct, indeed spectacular, confrontation with the new European imperialism arose instead with another contemporary thinker—a professor, but a quite different professor—whose humanism was much more thorough-going and whose proto-republicanism became vastly more articulate. The enormously influential Scottish scholar and poet George Buchanan (1506–1582) developed an uncompromising critique of world empire whose effects were immediately felt and whose arguments continuously informed reflection about European expansion for some two centuries to come.

Buchanan's initial encounter with the new imperialism began in 1547 as a professor of Greek at the University of Coimbra in Portugal—and at the outset it could be anything but critical. For Buchanan Coimbra marked a new beginning. Refounded specifically as a royal institution with only limited church connections, João III's new university seemed to promise the resolutely anti-clerical Buchanan the personal security which had eluded him so consistently in Scotland, England, and France.⁵ It is highly misleading therefore to imagine this appointment as merely a matter of teaching Greek to the sons of the Portuguese elite. A royal professor, he was in fact training the future administrators of the realm and its vast—indeed global—empire. Still more, he would be expected to promote and celebrate the realm, its dynasty, and Dom João in particular. Buchanan thus began his encounter with empire as its apologist.

As such he wrote prefatory verses to the *Commentarius de rebus a Lusitanis in India apud Dium gestis anno salutis nostrae MDXLVI* (Coimbra, 1548), an account written by his colleague, Diogo de Teive, describing the great Portuguese victory at the coastal Indian fortress of Diu

⁴ Domingo de Soto's scholasticism anticipates Vázquez's: "Those things which do not change, have fixed limits to their size, for an ant cannot reach the height of a man, nor a man the size of an elephant. . . . Consequently, as power exists in order to be exercised, and its exercise is impossible of over such an extended territory, it would follow that such an institution [as global empire] is vain. But God and nature never do anything in vain." (As quoted and translated by Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp. 53–4). The Dantean character of this kind of argument will be evident.

⁵ Regarding the founding of the Colégio Real or, perhaps more formally, Colégio das Artes e Humanidades, see A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *History of Portugal*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 1:195. The college must have been a hugely ambitious undertaking for, according to H. V. Livermore, it had some 1,200 students in 1548 and 1,500 by 1550, the year of Buchanan's arrest [*A New History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 148].

in 1546.⁶ Buchanan's words to the "invictissimus Rex" João III were fulsome indeed. His empire, stretching from the Tagus to the Ganges, embraced Europe, Asia, Africa. On it the sun never set (surely a trope at that juncture a good deal fresher than it subsequently became). Moreover, João's global dominions had brought new levels of self-knowledge and, therewith, universal renewal: "The World overcome by you, restored to itself, rejoiced to know its own boundaries and your justice" (*Gaudebat tibi devictus, sibi redditus orbis/Nosse suos fines, iustitiamque tuam*). Yet there existed one further title, one further conquest: that of death itself. Fully a third of the poem congratulated João on this last and most significant triumph, achieved of course through Teive's *Commentarius*. The greatest laurel then came not from brave generals but learned professors.⁷ In true humanist fashion Buchanan's ultimate praise was self-praise.

Probably we can never know how fully these verses represented Buchanan's feelings about the Portuguese Empire: writings of this sort were manifestly required by his appointment. But neither the position nor the views, however sincerely felt, would long endure. In 1550 Buchanan, Teive, and a third colleague, João de Costa, were jailed by the Lisbon Inquisition on a range of religious charges. If Buchanan had narrowly escaped Cardinal Beaton in Scotland, if he subsequently fled England following the decline of Thomas Cromwell, if his position at the Collège de Guyenne became ever more precarious before the powerful and reactionary Bishop of Bordeaux, only the Inquisition actually succeeded in catching him. And he was extremely lucky to obtain his release—possibly through the intervention of Dom João himself—two years later.

Once out of jail and out of Portugal, and eventually in the relative security provided by the patronage of Charles de Cossé, Marshal of France, Buchanan launched into one of the most thorough-going attacks on the emerging notion of empire ever to be undertaken in

⁶ Teive, *Commentarius* . . . , trans. by R. O. W. Goertz (Lisbon: R. B. Rosenthal, 1973). As might be expected, Teive's is a detailed account in the earlier humanist tradition, with reconstructed speech summaries emphasizing "the virtue and great spirit of our ancestors" ("maiores nostri virtute, animique magnitudine"). See esp. pp. 87, 104, and 152.

⁷ Reprinted and translated by John R. C. Martyn, "New Poems by Buchanan, from Portugal," in *Acta Conventus Neo-latini Sanctandreami*, ed. I. D. McFarlane (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1986), pp. 80-1.

the sixteenth century. Drawing on highly classical notions of politics, popularized in Scotland during the 1520s and 1530s by Hector Boece and John Bellenden, Buchanan insisted that legitimate political society required a civic-minded, military aristocracy who determined and pursued the public good through open discourse and rigorous independence. Only such a polity ever could realize the fullness of human potential. João's enormous realm was nothing of the sort. Quite the contrary, the Portuguese Crown had become a many-named monster whose vast dominions derived from vulnerable and unstable commerce—rather than from military and political virtue:

Being a single Portuguese, you are known on either side of the sea as ruler of the Algarve, of India, Arabia, Persia, Portuguese Guinea, Africa, the Congo, the Kongo Kingdom, and Sofada, and your proud titles include that of the ruler of Ethiopia parched with excessive heat, and of Ocean father of all waters, flowing round the threefold globe; and there is no port, trade, or island from which a slight gleam of profit shines which does not enhance your title. Since you have so many names, shall I not be right in calling you the Great King of Many Names? But if the fury of war or the raging sea shuts down the pepper stall, that great king of so many names will (lunch on the reputation purchased with borrowed money; he will) borrow money, or go hungry.⁸

⁸ Philip J. Ford and W. S. Watt, *George Buchanan: Prince of Poets* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), pp. 144–5:

Lusitanicus unus es mare ultra et
 citra Algarbicus Indicusque Arabsque,
 Persicus Guineusque et Africanus
 Congusque et Manicongus et Zalophus;
 5 nec tuis titulis abest superbis
 Æthiops nimio perustus æstu,
 nec circum triplicem refusus orbem
 cunctarum Oceanus parens aquarum;
 nec portus neque merx neque insula ulla est,
 10 lucelli unde levis refulget aura,
 quæ te non titulo augeat. tot ergo
 cui sunt nomina, nonne iure Regem
 multis nominibus vocabo magnum?
 sed Rex nominibus tot ille magnus,
 15 si belli furor aut mare æstuosum
 occludat piperariam tabernam,
 [famam fenore pransitabit emptam]
 versuram faciet vel esuribit.

Line 17 appears to conflate a variant version of the poem. The poem's meaning is further emphasized by it.

Here was a monstrous—indeed unnatural—conjoining of the world, one founded on demeaning greed, and the unworthy (and fickle) profits of trade. Buchanan was completely correct when he identified pepper as the empire's most consistently lucrative commodity, and his poems may well have contributed later to João's most unwelcome sobriquet, "the grocer king."⁹ That Dom João, the Portuguese military aristocracy (and the Inquisition, for that matter) fully shared Buchanan's contempt for commerce—though not, of course, his blistering hostility to the great Empire—only made his attacks all the more devastating. The whole structure was fundamentally wrong, motivated by the most corrupt impulses.

For how did these huge Spanish and Portuguese Empires actually arise? Buchanan had no doubt. As he explained at one point in his long poem on the cosmos, *De Sphæra*, they sprang from ever-growing greed:

All the barriers of the vast world [now] are thrown aside by the Iberian ships, and now regions far removed are revealed, though for long centuries unknown. And the reason thereof is that Orcus has sent out from the Stygian caves the insatiable monster Avarice, sister to the Harpies . . .

Avarice had insinuated herself into the hearts of the inhabitants of barren and impoverished Portugal with visions of great wealth abroad. With Avarice's encouragement (and corruption), the Portuguese would "leave their native land, and marriage bed, and home, their aged fathers and children weeping at the door." First to Africa, to Guinea and the Congo, then "after avarice and gain grew apace" the vast riches of India supplanted the African "spoils"—which were no longer

⁹ C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 59–60. Also see Boxer, "Portugal's *Drang nach Osten*," in *American Historical Review* 75, No. 6 (October 1970), p. 1691. Buchanan would surely have appreciated Garrett Mattingly's comment that by 1560 the Portuguese monarchy had become in effect the proprietor of "a bankrupt wholesale grocery business" [Cited by Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), p. 239]. Buchanan's anti-commercialism followed well-established humanist attitudes. Poggio Bracciolini had made the point as well as any in his *De nobilitate*: "I certainly cannot see what kind of nobility can be acquired by trade, for trade is is judged by wise men to be vile and base, and nothing that can be regarded as base and contemptible can be related to nobility in any way" [in *Oratoris et philosophi opera* (Basel, 1538), cited by Q. Skinner, "Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and the language of Renaissance humanism," in Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)] pp. 136–7, n. 76.

"good enough." The Portuguese thereupon took to the open sea, but in time even India appeared insufficient as the lure of China beckoned. Now "their avid hearts are sufficed neither by India or China," and the entire globe apparently lay open. The driving force which led the Portuguese to "track through the trackless parts of the world" was "the accursed love of gold." The entire enterprise, for Buchanan, was thus blighted at its root. Written for the instruction of his sometime pupil, Charles de Cossé's son Timoléon, the *De Sphæra* urged the young aristocrat to pursue both learning and military virtue—things "not vulnerable to financial losses or anxiety of greed."¹⁰

The great empires of antiquity, Buchanan stressed in contemporaneous poems, had been similarly motivated. Alexander the Great was "the world's most famous robber,/ Living for the destruction of the world," while "the heroic soul of Brutus" used "holy daggers" on behalf of his country. Jacques Grévin's play *César*, Buchanan declared, was Gaul's revenge on Caesar, one that dressed him in his "own spoils" and showed him for what he was. Accordingly, the *De Sphæra* also paused to denounce "the barbaric pride of Xerxes, the weapons of awful Caesar, and the crimes of the Emathian Tyrant [Alexander]."¹¹ All three were prompted by unbounded greed, all three undertook the destruction of the polis, all three were the great

¹⁰ James R. Naiden, *The SPHERA of George Buchanan* (Philadelphia?: privately printed, 1952), pp. 98–9, 94 (1.186–255; 1.21). Buchanan, *Omnia Opera*, 2:117–9; 2:114.

Omnia jam vasti ratibus panduntur Iberis
 Claustra orbis, rerum longis incognita seclis
 Jam secreta patent: namque insatiabile monstrum
 Orcus Avaritiâ Stygiis emisit ab antris
 Germanam Harpyis . . . (186–90)

It is revealing that the discoveries of the Portuguese, for Buchanan, do no more than show concretely "what reason had been trying to hammer out" (p. 99; 1.244). Thus, the Spanish fleet merely vindicated Posidonius' long-standing contention there existed no uninhabitable torrid zone on the globe (pp. 132–4; 3.452–566). Only affairs of the mind, the workings of reason, Buchanan insisted, were truly real and of enduring significance. Viewed from the almost Stoic perspective of Buchanan's rotating spheres, the earth and its transient empires seemed but a speck.

Buchanan was of course quite correct when he observed that poverty was the driving force behind much of the emigration from Portugal (Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 90).

¹¹ "Alexander Macedo"; "Idem"; "In *Julium Cæsarem*, Tragoediam M. Antonii Mureti," originally published in M. A. Muret, *Iuvenilia* . . . (Paris, 1552); liminary verse to Jacques Grévin, *Le Théâtre de Jacques Grévin* . . . (Paris, 1561); Naiden, *SPHERA*, p. 140. Epigrammatum (Icones) #2.16, #2.17 in *Omnia opera* (1715), 2.88; 2.102 (Muret); 2.163, (*De Sphæra*, lines 106–8).

criminals of the ancient world. Their lessons ought not—must not—be lost on modernity.

As we might expect, Buchanan's next poem to an "invictissimus rex"—this time Henry II of France exactly a decade later—adopted a vigorously anti-imperial perspective. France had resisted Charles V's universal empire and now curbed the "puffed-up" ambitions of his son Philip. Henry's general, François de Guise, and presumably thereby France generally, had been entrusted by God with "a special role to crush the proud," and overthrow such grandiose designs. For the governor of the universe "grants sovereignty to restrained moderation."¹²

France's role as the protector of the world against universal monarchy featured as a central themes in much of Buchanan's writing during the 1550s—as he indicated with remarkable directness in 1553 when he congratulated Henry II on one of the truly extraordinary victories of his reign, the relief of Metz. In 1552 Henry had seized Metz along with a number of imperial strongholds west of the Rhine and during the following winter held off a massive counter-attack led personally by the emperor. In stopping the Hapsburgs Henry had "checked a monster more prolific than the manifold Hydra, more destructive than Medusa." That world dominion of which Charles had madly dreamed, and for which he brought forth such huge forces, now discovered their limits and boundaries. France alone had stood firm against this universal aggression:

Charles was now dragging in tow the West and the North, and the armies of Eastern Austria, and the raging plunderer was attacking cities like a winter torrent. The valour of Germany had yielded, o shame under a half-caste emperor; the freedom of Italy, unused to bearing a tyrant's yoke, muttered in silence. Hope, the gentle nurse of restless ambition [cupido], had extended his prayers to the world, and pride, an unreliable prophet, was dreaming of universal dominion. You, good leader of warlike France, have restrained an arrogance ready to hope for all things, you put in bonds uncontrolled frenzy.

¹² "Ad invictissimum Franciæ Regem Henricum II post victos Caletes," in Ford, *Buchanan*, pp. 132–7. Celebrating the fall of Calais, the poem is normally portrayed as anti-English—and an indication of Buchanan's identification with France and the House of Guise. But that misses the point. It is the defeat of the Hapsburg world empire that is at issue: through her marriage to Philip, Mary Tudor's England has become simply one branch of her husband's dominions.

It will not surprise us that within Buchanan's lifetime his entire corpus would be banned in Portugal, more than a decade before being placed on the papal Index.¹³

Only unrestrained greed could have launched men into the open waters of the great oceans, an act otherwise almost against nature. In his ferocious condemnation of Portuguese Brazil (and world empire generally), Buchanan declared that, prompted by reckless greed, Europeans had now succeeded in penetrating the hitherto unbroken partitions of the globe: "Through iron and fire and a sea of ship wrecks/ We have broken down the secret bar of things" (*Per ferrum et ignes et per mare naufragum/ Secreta rerum claustra refregimus*).¹⁴ Buchanan again adopted a similar voice in his much later *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, when he spoke about the decline of shipping, in part through shipwreck, under Alexander III in the thirteenth century. Scottish sailors, he suggested, may have been "tempted through avarice to venture too rashly to sea." Like Vázquez, Buchanan appears to have shared the classical view of Horace and Claudian that the oceans were natural boundaries and that long sea journeys were therefore contrary to nature. As Horace had put it long ago: "In vain God in his wisdom/divided the lands with Ocean if impious/vessels scurry across/waters meant to stay untouched./Bold for any experience,/humanity races wherever forbidden."¹⁵ Amazingly, Buchanan appears

¹³ Ford, *Buchanan*, pp. 148–9. "Ad Henricum II Franciæ Regem de soluta urbis Mediomatricum obsidione" (To Henri II, King of France, on the relief of the siege of Metz): "nam multiformi tu numerosius/ Hydra, Medusa pestiferum magis,/ monstrum repressisti impetusque/prodigii retudisti inanes./Occasum et Arcton jam comitem trahens,/et arma Eoæ Carolus Austriæ,/torrentis hiberni petebat/more furens populator urbes./sub semimauro Caesare, pro pudor!/ Germana virtus cesserat, Italum/indocta liberta tyranni/ferre jugum tacite fremebat./spes inquietæ blanda cupidinis/ nutrix in orbem vota tetenderat,/rerumque fastus somniabat/imperium, male certus augur./tu bellicosæ dux bone Galliæ/sperare promptam cuncta superbiam/comprescuisti, tu dedisti/indomito laqueos furori." (emphasis mine)

It will not surprise us that the Coimbra poem does not feature in subsequent collections of Buchanan's poetry, though Thomas Ruddiman added it to the eighteenth-century *Omnia opera*.

Buchanan was condemned by the Lisbon Inquisition and his works totally banned in 1581. His writings again were condemned by Pope Sixtus V in 1590 and yet again by Pope Clement VIII in 1596 (Martyn, "New Poems," p. 79). The Portuguese nevertheless continued to like Buchanan's poem, and the edition of Diogo's *Commentarius* published at Rome in 1602 simply omitted his name from its title.

¹⁴ "In colonias brasilienses, vel sodomitas a Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam" (verse #8), *Fratres fraterrimi* #30, in *Omnia opera*, 2:25–6.

¹⁵ *Odes* 1.3 (lines 21–6): "nequiquam deus abscidit/ prudens Oceano dissociabili/ terras, si tamen impiae/non tangenda rates transiliunt vada./audax omnia perpeti/

seriously to have endorsed Alexander's (alleged) policy of restricting Scottish traders to the local retail markets.¹⁶

If avarice had created an utterly monstrous empire sustained through contemptible commerce, just such corrupt impulses had also brought Buchanan before the Inquisition. And the results were no less unnatural. Buchanan believed, with some reason, that a junior colleague, one Belchior Beleago or Beliagoa was the informer (*quadru-plator*)¹⁷ who had betrayed him to the Inquisition. In a furious cycle of poems Buchanan subsequently denounced Beleago as a "monstrous animal" (a "belua"—perhaps involving a play on his name) who tramples learning at the university. Beleago is incapable of working out a syllogism; he leaves the books of the university unused. Instead, he promotes every conceivable kind of trade: from food stuffs to household goods, to broken down horses, to sick slaves. There is no deal he is not in on, no corrupt practice nor demeaning occupation in which he does not engage. He is a monopolist in every sordid art (*inter artes sordidas monopolium*). There is nothing he will not try to sell and, if Laverna, the divinity protecting thieves and impostors, would allow it, he probably would seize control of the water supply and of the sewers as well. Pay privies, perhaps? He may pretend to be a professor but the one thing he really does know, the only thing he really can teach, is an avaricious deceitfulness.

Thus Beleago, who sells everything, has in the fullest possible sense "sold out" the university. If Beleago's contemptible commercialism is incompatible with learning and with civic virtue (though perfectly compatible with the values of the Empire), it has also perverted the natural relations among men. "You wish, Beleago, to skin him alive—the man whom you should have honored as though he were your father" (i.e., the senior professor, Buchanan himself). "It's something

gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas." I have adopted David Mulroy's translation, *Horace's Odes and Epodes* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 56. However, I believe "God in his wisdom" rather than "the prudent god" for "deus prudens" more closely approaches a 16th-century reading of the poem.

¹⁶ Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, 4 vols., translated by James Aikman (Edinburgh, 1824), 1:391–2; Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp. 60–1.

¹⁷ The use of this classical term—an informer who would receive a quarter of the penalty—neatly links Buchanan's two charges against Beleago: avarice and betrayal. For a fuller discussion of the themes within this paragraph, see Williamson, "George Buchanan, Civic Virtue, and Commerce: European Imperialism and its Sixteenth-Century Critics," in *Scottish Historical Review* 75, No. 1 (April 1996), pp. 20–37.

you wouldn't do to a she-goat unless it were dead."¹⁸ In the sixteenth century these were strong words indeed. What could be more unnatural than the betrayal of a parent and especially a father?¹⁹ It involved nothing less than the inversion of nature and reason.

Now it is easy enough to see how these writings proclaimed the Portuguese Empire (or any global empire) as the negation of all value. It was doubtless more than enough to drive the Lisbon court apoplectic. But none of it even approaches the depth of Buchanan's angry hostility. The great empire was profoundly perverse—quite literally—and could find no conceivable justification however contorted. At issue was not simply abstract legitimacy but quite specific public policy. During Buchanan's years in Portugal João had abandoned his "natural" realm with its frontiers in Morocco for the development of transoceanic Brazil. Moral catastrophe had resulted: society's true and inherently secular strength had found itself supplanted by priestly power, specifically the new clerical imperium in Brazil:

Africa deseritur, miles mendicat egenus,
Vi sine tuta fugax oppida Maurus habet.
Accipit obscenos Brasilia fusca colonos,
Quique prius pueros foderat, arva fodit,
Qui sua militibus tollit, dat rura cinædis,
Jure sub adverso nil bene Marte gerit.

[Africa is deserted, the needy soldier begs;
Without struggle the Moor, prone to flight, holds safe the towns. Dark
Brazil takes on the obscene settlers.
And he (i.e., the clergy) who formerly defiled the boys, defiles the
fields,
And he (i.e., João) who takes away land (in Morocco) from his own
soldiers, gives it (in Brazil) to the pervers:
Nothing goes well in war when right is on the other side].²⁰

The Moroccan "towns" (*oppida*) Buchanan surely has in mind are most notably the fortresses of Alcácer and Arzila, abandoned by the

¹⁸ "Ad Rectorem Scholæ Conimbricæ Mursam," Iambon liber #6, in *Omnia opera*, 2:66; "In Eundem" [i.e., Beleago, not the Coimbra rector, Murça], Iambon liber #9, in *Omnia opera*, 2:67; "In Beleagonem," Iambon liber #7, in *Omnia opera*, 2:66.

¹⁹ The great English-language cliché on the subject of course comes from lines in the constantly-quoted passage in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (I.iii.114–5): "Strength should be lord to imbecility,/ And the rude son should strike his father dead." For the passage and the age it truly provided the crowning example of the world grotesquely inverted. Neither Calvin nor the Counter-Reformers would disagree.

²⁰ Buchanan, *Omnia Opera*, 2:293.

Portuguese in 1549 and 1550 in favor of the consolidation of Brazil. In 1549 João appointed Tomé de Sousa governor of Brazil with the assignment of centralizing and coordinating its occupation—which included establishing a capital at Bahia de Todos os Santos.²¹ Military and, presumably, political virtue had given way to corruption in every sense.

Buchanan's verses say still more about João's unnatural empire. Brazilian commerce is not only economic but also sexual, and the reference to the clergy as "perverts" (*cinaedi*), who literally dig both the boys and the fields, is enormously telling. The "nefarious sin" of sodomy or anal intercourse, whether with a human being or with an animal, constituted the natural order's equivalent to heresy: as heresy defied God's truth revealed in his Church, so the "pecado nefando" defied God's order revealed in nature. The Inquisition was empowered to deal with the full range of such crimes.²² Much more gender-specific than witchcraft, indeed understood as an exclusively male crime, and vastly more often lethal to those so accused, the "nefarious sin," along with recalcitrant heresy and apostasy, carried the ultimate penalty, that of being burned alive. The close association heresy and the great sin ensured that both Calvin and Luther were constantly denounced as sodomites within Counter-Reformed literature.²³ Mary Elizabeth Perry has observed that Muslims too were

²¹ Although royal policies toward Morocco and Brazil long pre-dated these specific decisions, the events of these years necessarily gave them public prominence. It is difficult to say what Buchanan would have made of King Sebastian's later ill-fated adventure in Morocco as "Christ's captain." See H. W. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 146, 149, and 153; Marques, *History of Portugal*, 1:308 and 311–2.

²² Mary Elizabeth Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin' in Early Modern Seville," in Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma, eds., *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe* (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 1989), p. 68, and more generally 67–89; Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 267. My discussion in this paragraph derives from Perry's penetrating analysis. For a discussion of the association of witchcraft with "unnatural" crimes (specifically treason and "tyranny"), see Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Ages of James VI: The Apocalypse, the Union, and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), chapter 2. I am grateful to Raymond Waddington for drawing my attention to this article.

²³ Its reception within Ireland is noted by Nicholas P. Canny, "The Formation of the Irish Mind: Religion, Politics, and Gaelic Literature, 1580–1750," in *Past and Present* 95 (May 1982), pp. 91–116. Perry observes that female homosexuality prompted little comment from Spanish clerics and little concerned them. Moreover, although women obviously might participate in a sodomous act with a male, Iberian women, apparently, were never prosecuted. "It seems likely that heterosexual sodomy was not considered as serious a crime against nature as was homosexual intercourse."

traditionally associated with homosexuality in Spain and doubtless within Iberia generally.²⁴

All of this became immediately relevant to Buchanan because at some point the charge of sodomy was brought against the Coimbra professors in what was patently an effort to bolster the Inquisition's case.²⁵ "Unnatural" professors could be presumed to be heretical professors. Although Buchanan himself does not seem formally to have confronted the charge (it may have been no more than an insinuation), his anger is easily imagined. For here were the clergy—always concerned to protect themselves from being charged with the great sin, as Perry indicates, and as the militantly anti-clerical Buchanan surely knew²⁶—accusing laymen of their own crimes.

It is within this context that we need to read his spectacular condemnation of the Brazilian enterprise, "In colonias brasilienses, vel sodomitas a Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam" ("To the Brazilian colonists, or the Sodomites from Portugal sent into Brazil"). The sexual perversity of the Portuguese who settled in Brazil—both the clergy and the unsavory "degredados" (transported convicts)²⁷ over whom they ruled—had made the land, quite literally, a latter-day Sodom and Gomorrah. Buchanan's words are altogether uncompromising:

In her study of Seville between 1567 and 1616, Perry could find only one male charged with sodomizing a woman, and he escaped effectively with a reprimand. The woman was not charged at all. Here was a male crime, one that was perceived as threat to the Tridentine emphasis on Christian marriage—as we, or Senator Helms, might say, family values). See Perry, "The Nefarious Sin," pp. 70, 71, and 79).

Perry also observes the functional analogue of sodomy to the crime of witchcraft in other parts of Europe. As with witchcraft, sodomy executions provided a kind of "morality play"; as with witchcraft, it was closely associated with the "unnatural"; as with witchcraft, the increasing incidence of the crime was associated with the latter days of the world. The great differences lie in: (1) the virtually total gender exclusivity; (2) the higher levels of conviction; (3) the specific and close association with heresy; (4) the greater cruelty of the punishment (witches were normally strangled before being burned). See Perry, "The Nefarious Sin," pp. 68 and 75–6, and Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness*, Chap. 2.

²⁴ Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin'," p. 76.

²⁵ Marques, *History of Portugal*, p. 299. Marques has described the charges as "pretexts," as in some sense they surely were.

²⁶ Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin'," p. 74: "Inquisition records reflect a desire to protect the reputation of the Church, as well as to purify the faith. For this reason, accounts of clerics accused of improper behavior in the confessional refer only obliquely to homosexual behavior."

²⁷ Part of the purpose of the 1549 reorganization was "reforming the morals of the colonists," many of whom were "degredados." At Bahia they comprised 400 of the original 1000 settlers. For Buchanan they were degenerates, the secular counterparts to the clergy. See Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, pp. 87 and 90.

Descende cœlo turbine flammeo
 Armatus iras, Angele, vindices,
 Libidinum jam notus ultor
 Exitio Sodomæ impudicæ.

[Come down from the sky in flaming whirlwind,
 Armed, Angel, with avenging anger,
 Long since known as the scourge of lust
 In the destruction of Sodom the wicked city].

En rursus armis quod pereat tuis
 Lustrum Gomorrhæ suscitāt æmulum
 Syrūm propago & execrandæ
 Spurcitæ renovat palæstram.

[May it perish once more at thy hands.
 The progeny of the Syrians calls up a sacrificial offering
 To rival Gomorrah; and it renews an arena
 For accursed and unspeakable filthiness].²⁸

The Portuguese, and potentially all Europe, had broken down the natural boundaries of the oceans ("the secret bar of things"). It had proven costly ("a sea of shipwrecks"), but now the entire world lay open to European corruption—"so that no place will be free of the unspeakable lust/Perpetrated by the filthy perverts" (*Ne deesset impuris cinaedis/Prostibulum veneris nefandæ*). Buchanan was emphatic that Portuguese penetration of the New World had brought to a mild region "a shameful servitude under the rule of these disgusting settlers" and had brought unspeakable corruption to "that part of the world which a gentle and temperate exuberance/Has consecrated as its own seat and proper place."²⁹ No practice of the native Brazilians however primitive—not even cannibalism itself, that ultimate mark of barbarism—could compare with what had been visited upon them by the unnatural Portuguese Sodomites.³⁰ As with the essay later written by Michel de Montaigne about the cannibals of Brazil, Buchanan

²⁸ "In colonias brasilienses, vel sodomitas a Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam," *Fratres fraterrimi* #30, in *Omnia opera*, 2:25–6 (verses #1 and #2).

²⁹ Verse #3:

Pars ista mundi quam sibi propriam
 Sedem dicavit mollis amœnitas
 Luxusque, sub fœdis colonis
 Servitum tolerat pudendum.

³⁰ Verse #9:

Gens illa nullos mitis in hospites,
 Et ora victu assueta nefario,
 Portenta conspexit Cyclopum
 Sanguineâ dape fœdiora.

did not idealize the societies of the New World. But they certainly might appear that way when compared with what had now reached their shores.

When Buchanan thought of the “degredados,” he visualized poverty and corruption:

Abominandis arsit amoribus
Strigosus æstu, pauperie et fame,
Glandis vorator virulentum
E raphanis redolens odorem.

[He burns with abominable passions
Made lean by the surging sea, by poverty, by hunger,
Redolent of the poisonous odor
Of his subsistence on acorns and radishes].

The lines anticipate Shakespeare’s “full-acorned boar” whose sexuality involves no more than grunt and mount. Such individuals would only realize their worst impulses when unleashed into the gentler Brazilian climate.³¹

But when he thought of the clergy, he saw something vastly worse. For here—in the fullest possible sense—was the perversion of the Christian faith itself:

[Those people (i.e., the Brazilians) hospitable to no guests,
And shores (“ora” a pun on “mouths”) accustomed to an unspeakable diet
(i.e., human flesh),
Have looked upon sights more disgraceful
Than the bloody feasts of the Cyclops].

³¹ Verse #4; Verse #5:

Quem, rere, ponet nequitiae modum
Frenis libido libera? et insolens
Humanioris ferre victus
Illecebras meliore cœlo?

[What limit to wickedness will be found
To a loose unbridled lust,
Unwonted to suffer the enticements

Of a more humane way of living under a better sky?]

Cf. *Cymbeline*, II.v.15–17: “. . . Perchance he spoke not, but,/ Like a full-acorn’d boar, a German one,/ Cried ‘O!’ and mounted. . . .” The German *eichel* means both “acorn” and “penis.” See R. B. Waddington, “Entertaining the Offered Phallacy: Male Bedtricks in Shakespeare,” in J. M. Mucciolo, ed., *Shakespeare’s Universe: Renaissance Ideas and Conventions* (Aldershot, Hants.: Scolar Press, 1996), p. 128. Subsequently in his *Historia* Buchanan himself specifically associated the consumption of acorns with the primitive and uncivilized. Cultivation meant wheat, not acorns, the language of Cicero and Terrence, not that of Cato and Ennius, Latin not Gaelic (*History of Scotland*, 1:9).

O Christiani infamia nominis!
 O fœda labes et nota temporum!
 O turpium turpisque causa et
 Exitus, et pretium laborum!

[O shame of the Christian name!
 O shameful decline and sign of the times,
 O vile cause of villainous men,
 Both the outcome and the prize of their labors].

With all of his talk about sodomy (along with latter-day Sodom and Gomorrah), about “accursed and unspeakable filthiness,” defilement, unbridled lust, “filthy perverts” (*impuris cinaedis*), and his great emphasis on clerical homosexuality, one might almost think that European decadence had issued in the syphilis pandemic. We encounter a potential pun, typical of his poetry, in the word *tabes* (“falling off”) and *labes* (“plague,” “pestilence”) appearing at the second line: “O shameful decline [plague?] and sign of the times.” The intensely sexual character of the “turpes coloni” links almost inescapably with the great medical crisis which had arisen at the end of the fifteenth century and which immediately had been identified as deriving through contact with the New World.

Winfried Schleiner has shown how early English medical histories portrayed the great affliction as deriving from Spain and as the ironic, if tragic, consequence of its great empire in America. The Spaniards set out for conquest, only to return with sickness. Thus for the physician Philip Barrough writing in the 1580s, the “Morbus Gallicus” offered immediate political implications for Protestant England:

First, the Spaniards borrowed it [syphilis] of the Indians, and brought it home in stead of their gold, and afterwards *Charles* the fift Emperour of Rome, who was a man of great power, and delighted in shedding bloud, spared neither men, woman, nor child, insomuch that he spoiled a great part of Italy . . . and at the last came to Rome and Naples, with his whole hoast, spoyling all as he went with great cruelty: and for his hire, this disease began first to shew itself plentifully among his people, and specially because his soldiers were much given to venery . . . the first finding of this grievous sicknesse, was brought into Spaine, by *Columbus* at his comming home, so that all Christendome may curse the Emperour and *Columbus*.³²

³² Philip Barrough, *The Method of Phisick, containing the causes, signes, and cures of inward diseases in man body from the head to the foot* (London, 1590), p. 361; quoted by Schleiner, “Moral Attitudes toward Syphilis and its Prevention in the Renaissance,” in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 68 (1994), pp. 391–3; Schleiner, *Medical Ethics in*

But more interesting than Barrough's association of disease—rather than triumph—with world empire and Catholic power, is its linkage with exchange and commerce, and finally deception:

Then *Columbus* trauelled againe, and brought with him little gold, but all his men were infected with this grieve: insomuch that the phisitions in those daies did not knowe what to make of the grieve . . . before the siege of Naples the Spaniards for frendship they bare to the Frenchmen, sent to them of their curtizans infected with this grieve, minding to let them have some of their iewels, which they brought out of the Indian countrey. The Frenchmen (not knowing their kind hearts) fell in loue with them . . . to their great cost and trouble to this day.³³

Commerce, at once economic and sexual, occurs between Indian and Spaniard, between Spaniard and Frenchman, between men and women. These associations need to be seen as interconnected features of Buchanan's violent anti-commercialism. Commerce led to moral corruption—as it undermined civic and military virtue. It led to physical corruption—bringing infection rather than abstemious health. It arose with distended empire—supplanting political life within the *respublica*. All of these phenomena, all of these relationships, whether with conquistadors or courtesans, were underwritten by avarice. Buchanan's intense moralism led directly to his Stoicism, his revolutionary Calvinism, his proto-republicanism, his abiding anti-imperialism.

It also led to his anti-clericalism. Barrough adopted the common view in finding the origins of syphilis with the Amerindians. Buchanan's sometime pupil, King James VI, agreed when he denounced "the pockie Indian slaues" as tobacco-smoking degenerates.³⁴ But, within "In colonias brasilienses" Buchanan visibly implied otherwise. Corruption derived from degenerate settlers, not degenerate Amerindians. In so saying, Buchanan had gone Barrough one better: the great Catholic empires did not import the disease, they created the

the Renaissance (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1995), pp. 162–3. The first edition of the *Method of Phisick* appeared in 1583 and, according to Barrough, omitted the section on syphilis through a printer's error. I am grateful to Raymond Waddington for drawing my attention to Schleiner's article.

³³ Barrough, *Method of Phisick*, p. 362; Schleiner, "Moral Attitudes," p. 391; Schleiner, *Medical Ethics*, p. 162.

³⁴ James VI and I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (London, 1604) in *The Workes of the Most High and Mightie Prince James*, ed. James Montague (London, 1616), pp. 214, 215, and 220. See Williamson, "Scots, Indians, and Empire: The Scottish Politics of Civilization, 1519–1609," in *Past and Present* 150 (February 1996), p. 63.

disease. For Barrough, James, and probably most Europeans, syphilis arose from commerce with the Americans; Buchanan appears to say that it arose from clerical perversity—commerce with the choir boys.

* * *

More than a little irony exists therefore in the contrast between the anti-imperialism of the Renaissance and the anti-imperialism of the Enlightenment. Both Condorcet and Buchanan actively promoted the civic tradition and classical political values. Both were violently hostile to the clergy. Both were no less hostile to the European empires—and not least for the priestcraft associated with them. If Condorcet had ever read Buchanan's verses in the epigraph, he would surely have endorsed their sentiments.

Yet their views on trade were diametrically opposed. Condorcet easily could have accepted the claims of King James and his advisors that commerce—in the strictly economic sense—comprised a civilizing dynamic. For Condorcet unfettered exchange, involving goods of the mind no less than material goods, provided the model for just relations among nations. It held out the promise of improvement; it underwrote progress. In the enlightened future Condorcet expected Europeans to confine themselves to "free trade," altogether eschewing conquest and exploitation.³⁵

As happens so often with figures in the early modern period, Buchanan emerges Janus-faced, at once modern and also archaic. It would be characteristic of Buchanan in a great many ways. For all his republican sentiments, he actively sought the patronage of monarchs throughout his career: James V, Henry VIII, João III, Henry II, Mary Stewart, James VI. For all his hostility to commerce, and his use of the anti-Jewish aspersion at moments to articulate this hostility, Buchanan associated happily and closely with New Christians and, perhaps, marranos.³⁶ But he never proved more Janus-faced than in his fierce, many-layered critique of unnatural empire.

Writing at almost exactly the same time, that other Scottish revolutionary, John Knox, had reached similar conclusions—and dis-

³⁵ Condorcet, *Selected Writings*, p. 261.

³⁶ See Williamson, "George Buchanan, Civic Virtue and Commerce: European Imperialism and its Sixteenth-Century Critics," in *Scottish Historical Review* 75, No. 1 (April 1996), pp. 20–37.

plays similarly multi-directional qualities. Immersed in a Judaic and biblicist vocabulary, one that contrasted utterly with Buchanan's resolute classicism, Knox nevertheless also decried global empires in his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* of 1558. The Lord, Knox insisted, "hath not created the earth to satisfy the ambition of two or three tyrants, but for the universal seed of Adam, and hath appointed and defined the bounds of their habitation to diverse nations, assigning diverse countries."³⁷ The great catastrophe to befall the British Isles in the 1550s—the absorption of Scotland by France through the marriage of Mary Stewart to Francis II, the absorption of England by Spain through Mary Tudor's marriage to Philip II—had resulted quite literally from a monster in nature. Foreign domination arose from unnatural female governance and was in itself unnatural. Buchanan agreed completely.

But if *The First Blast* was anti-imperialist in the sense now becoming normative in the sixteenth century, the tract was also British oriented and ultimately unionist—and thereby imperialist in the traditional sense of a composite monarchy.³⁸ Whether the larger British stage would have rested comfortably with Buchanan's civic aristocracy is more problematic. Great Britain could fit the language of Israel and Judah, or of the Hebrew tribes, but whether it could also fit the language of the citizen was another matter. There might emerge an Achaean League, but it would be difficult indeed to imagine Buchanan's political world within the expansive "perfect" union proposed by his sometime pupil: his Britannic Majesty, King James I.

Nevertheless, by the 1550s, anti-imperialist thought of a strikingly thorough-going sort had appeared in Europe. Employing both classical and biblical vocabularies, it went well beyond the Neo-Thomism of the broadly contemporaneous Iberian theorists. More radical and also more enduring, elements from Buchanan's critique of the imperial sickness would echo through the next two centuries and shape the modern world.

³⁷ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, reprinted in *Knox on Rebellion*, ed. R. A. Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 41.

³⁸ See Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness*, Chap. 1; Williamson, "A Patriot Nobility? Calvinism, Kin-ties, and Civic Humanism," in *Scottish Historical Review* 72, No. 1 (April 1993), pp. 1–21.

JAN WOJCIK

Conferring with Dick Popkin

In order to understand my debt to Dick Popkin one needs to understand a bit about the circumstances of my life in July of 1990 when I attended the month-long research seminar on *Les Trois Imposteurs* in Leiden. While trying to come to grips with a painful divorce and the death of one of my children, I was pursuing my Ph.D., despite the general pessimism about the possibility of finding a tenure-track position at the end of the road.

I had never before traveled outside of the United States. I had never participated in an international research seminar. I had no conception of the responsibility of each participant to contribute to the success of the enterprise. My self-esteem was at an all-time low, and I was acutely aware that I knew almost nothing compared to Dick and the others at the seminar. My southern ears had great difficulty with foreign accents. I was never fully at ease, always on guard against committing some intellectual *faux pas*. I was most comfortable when alone; I fell immediately and madly in love with Europe and enjoyed strolling the streets of Leiden or sitting at an outdoor cafe soaking up the atmosphere.

When I look back, I find it rather remarkable that Dick never took me aside to tell me either to shape up or ship out. Instead, he and Julie treated me with the utmost courtesy and friendliness throughout the month, and Julie went out of her way to include me in sight-seeing expeditions (where I felt a bit more comfortable than in the seminar setting). Neither so much as hinted that my behavior was peculiar at best. Dick never suggested that I was failing to take full advantage of the opportunity I had been given. He may have wished privately that he had accepted someone who had been better able to contribute to the intellectual growth of the seminar participants instead of me, but if so he kept his wishes to himself.

In retrospect, I realize that the month that I spent in Leiden was the turning-point in my effort to put my life back together. Although

I was incapable at that time of appreciating the opportunity that the seminar offered, I did, for the first time in what seemed like ages, have something to think about other than my own grief, inadequacies, and failures. Beguiled by windmills and canals, I began to look ahead rather than back. Ultimately, I completed my degree and (against all odds) was offered a tenure-track position in the philosophy department at Auburn University.

In the spring of 1995, I helped to make arrangements for Dick to give a talk here at AU. I was tied up with classes until shortly before the time for him to read his paper, when I trotted over to the appropriate building in time to introduce him. Afraid that he might not remember me well enough to recognize me, I offered my hand and said, "Hi, I'm Jan Wojcik, and it's a real pleasure to have you here." I realized how much I had matured professionally when I saw his look of surprise, quickly followed by a marvelous twinkle in his eyes. "My goodness," he exclaimed. "You have *changed*!"

That change was in large part due to his having accepted me as I was that July and his not placing demands on me that I was in no shape at that time to meet, and I want to take this opportunity to thank him.

“THIS DUE DEGREE OF BLINDNESS”:¹
BOYLE, HUME, AND THE LIMITS OF REASON

Jan Wojcik

If a Man were to demolish a Fabrick, there is no necessity of doing it stone by stone; it is abundantly enough if he undermine and destroy those Pillars which are the main supporters of it; for then it falls to the ground, and is no other than a heap of Rubbish, though many of the materials were very good in themselves.

Peter Browne²

Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous.

David Hume³

Section 1: Introduction

In recent years, scholars have become increasingly aware of the theological implications of Book I of David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. Richard Popkin, for example, has pointed out that Hume extended Nicolas Malebranche's attack on the inefficacy of second causes. Malebranche had denied that there is anything perceivable by humans in the agent that could cause the alleged effect, and Hume, Popkin argues, extended this same reasoning to exclude God as the cause of any effect in the world. Hume, in Popkin's view, was specifically attacking the millenarian religious views of such major scientists as Isaac Newton, David Hartley, and Joseph Priestley.⁴ Paul Russell has argued that the sceptical arguments in the *Treatise* are,

¹ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, in *Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 280.

² Peter Browne, *A Letter in Answer to a Book entitled Christianity not Mysterious* (Dublin, 1697), p. 4.

³ *David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2nd ed., with text revised and notes by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 272.

⁴ Richard H. Popkin, "Divine Causality: Newton, the Newtonians, and Hume," in *Greene Centennial Studies: Essays Presented to Donald Greene*, eds. Paul J. Korshin and Robert R. Allen (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984), pp. 40–56.

at least in part, aimed directly at the dogmatic religious rationalism of men such as Newton, John Locke, and Samuel Clarke. One major motive for Hume's attack, Russell argues, was Clarke's attempt in the 1704–1705 Boyle Lectures to defend the truth and certainty of the Christian religion in the spheres of metaphysics and morals by demonstrative reasoning.⁵ Most recently, J. C. A. Gaskin has revealed the comprehensiveness of Hume's attack on religion by showing how Hume's various works, taken as a whole, form a structured critique of the rationality of belief.⁶

Hume himself explicitly identified the religious rationalism of Locke and Clarke as his target when he commented to James Boswell that he “never had entertained any belief in Religion since he began to read Locke and Clarke.”⁷ In this essay I add to our understanding of Hume's attack on religion by examining his writings in the context of the thought of Robert Boyle. Boyle, like Locke and Clarke, emphasized the rationality of believing in Christianity by arguing that truths ascertainable by unaided human reason (the truths of natural theology) serve as a bridge to believing in the Christian revelation itself. Unlike Locke and Clarke, however, Boyle more or less left reason behind once that bridge was crossed; in Boyle's view human reason is simply not competent to understand a significant number of revealed truths. In short, Boyle's defense of Christianity (unlike that of many of his contemporaries) rested in large part on his arguments for reason's limits.

In what follows I show how Hume's arguments are related to Boyle's thought, and argue that understanding Hume's thought in this context gives us reason to take Hume's scepticism about the existence of the external world seriously. Before going further, however, I want to emphasize the fact that I am not claiming that Boyle's views were in any sense a determining factor in the formation of Hume's philosophy. Although scholars acknowledge Hume's general familiarity with Boyle's thought,⁸ Hume was so widely read that (in

⁵ Paul Russell, “Skepticism and Natural Religion in Hume's *Treatise*,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (Apr.–June 1988), pp. 247–65.

⁶ J. C. A. Gaskin, “Hume on Religion,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. David Fate Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 313–34.

⁷ *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle*, eds. G. Scott and F. A. Pottle, 18 vols. (privately printed, New York 1928–1934), vol. 2, p. 227, quoted in Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 51.

⁸ See, for example, David Fate Norton, “Introduction to Hume's Thought,” in

the words of David Fate Norton), "no single writer or philosophical tradition can be relied upon to provide a comprehensive key to his thought."⁹ Nevertheless, reading Hume's attack on the rationality of religious belief in the light of Boyle's arguments concerning reason's limits can contribute to a correct interpretation of Hume's scepticism.

In Section 2 below, I set the scene by describing two different approaches to the relationship between reason and religion in seventeenth-century England. In Section 3, I explore in some detail Boyle's claims concerning the two pillars of natural theology, the immortality of the soul and final causes—claims with which Locke and Clarke would have been in total agreement. In Section 4, I examine Boyle's views on reason's inability to comprehend the content of revelation, views with which Locke and Clarke would have vehemently disagreed. Turning then to Hume's thought, in the fifth section, I detail Hume's demolition of the two pillars of natural theology, and in, Section 6, I explain how Hume's positive philosophy, an account of how we come to hold the beliefs we do in the absence of rational arguments for them, can be seen to be a response to those such as Boyle who used arguments concerning reason's limits in support of religion. Finally, in the conclusion (Section 7), I argue that it is Boyle, not Hume, who ought properly to be termed a "sceptical realist."¹⁰

Section 2: The Seventeenth-Century Background

The emphasis of seventeenth-century thinkers on the rationality of believing in religion has been stressed in the secondary literature. Richard S. Westfall, for example, in his tremendously influential *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England*, summed the situation up by claiming that from the emphasis on rational religion, "deism, the religion of reason, steps full grown."¹¹ Westfall is correct—but

The Cambridge Companion to Hume, ed. David Fate Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 2.

⁹ Norton, "Introduction to Hume's Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, p. 3.

¹⁰ The term comes from John Wright's *The Sceptical Realism of David Hume* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).

¹¹ Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 219.

only partially so. By confining himself primarily to the seventeenth-century interest in natural religion, Westfall neglected to explore fully the complexity and variety of claims regarding the content of revelation.

Although (generally speaking) seventeenth-century thinkers agreed that human reason is competent to examine and evaluate the evidence for natural religion (for example, the evidence that God exists, that human beings can discern at least some of his attributes because they are evidenced in the world around us, that there are signs of both his general and special providence), seventeenth-century thinkers *disagreed* about whether human reason is competent to judge and evaluate the content of scriptural passages as far as revelation is concerned. *Some* individuals, such as Joseph Glanvill, John Locke, and Samuel Clarke, believed that God, being reasonable, would not command assent to any *unreasonable* revelation; in their view, scriptural passages must be interpreted in such a way as to be consonant with human reason.¹² Other thinkers, however (and the most prominent of these was Robert Boyle), argued that although human reason is competent to judge and evaluate the truths of natural religion, it is quite simply incompetent to judge the content of revelation. Indeed, Boyle argued that the most important of reason's tasks is to ascertain and acknowledge its own limits, and thus to discern when it is

¹² Joseph Glanvill, *A Seasonable Recommendation, and Defence of Reason, in the Affairs of Religion; Against Infidelity, Scepticism, and Fanaticisms of all sorts* (London, 1670); John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Bk. 4, Chap. 18, Sect. 5; Samuel Clarke, *Sixteen Sermons on the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of Christian Revelation, preached in the Years 1704 and 1705, at the Lecture founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esquire*, in *The Works of Samuel Clarke, D. D.*, 4 vols., British Philosophers and Theologians of the 17th & 18th Centuries, series ed. René Wellek (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978). The source of such views in seventeenth-century England was most likely the writings of the Socinians; see, for example, Joachim Stegmann's *Brevis Disquisitio: Or, a Brief Enquiry Touching a Better way Than is commonly made use of, to refute Papists, and reduce Protestants to certainty and Unity in Religion*, trans. John Biddle (London, 1653; originally published in 1633). For general background information on Socinianism, see J. Hay Colligan, *The Arian Movement in England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1913); H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951); George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962); J. A. I. Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies 1660–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For anti-Trinitarian views on reason's competence and responses from Boyle and his contemporaries concerning reason's limits, see Jan W. Wojcik, "The Theological Context of Boyle's *Things above Reason*," in *Robert Boyle Reconsidered*, ed. Michael Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 139–55.

operating outside of its proper sphere (as it is when it questions truths revealed in scripture).¹³ A careful investigation of the logical inter-relationships between knowledge of the natural world, natural religion, and revealed religion in Boyle's thought can help to illuminate the systematic way in which Hume attacked the very foundations of the religious edifice that had been so painstakingly constructed by seventeenth-century scientists and theologians, both lay and divine. Further, such an investigation reveals why Hume could not topple religious belief by expressing scepticism about what we can know about the external world but instead was led to extend his scepticism to our belief that there *is* an external world.

Section 3: Boyle on Reason's Competence

Boyle considered it quite appropriate that he, a layman, should write extensively about religion. As he put it, when the religious ship is threatened by shipwreck, private passengers should lend the professional seamen a hand.¹⁴ Although Boyle's theological writings cover a wide range of topics, from the importance of learning Greek and Hebrew in order to facilitate a proper understanding of scripture to an essay on the ways in which God might bring about the resurrection of the body while preserving personal (bodily) identity, his primary concern was the proper relationship of science and reason to faith. While in some works (for example, *The Christian Virtuoso*, 1690) he emphasized the "science and reason" aspect of the relationship, and in others (for example, *A Discourse Concerning Things above Reason*, 1681) he emphasized the "faith" aspect, his various writings fit together in such a way as to present a comprehensive religious viewpoint which might best be expressed by saying that Boyle's enterprise was to show why it is reasonable to have faith, and why it is reasonable to assent to truths which we cannot comprehend or explain, or which even at times appear contradictory to other known

¹³ For a comprehensive study of Boyle's views on reason's limits, see Jan W. Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and the Limits of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ Robert Boyle, *The Reconcilableness of Reason and Religion*, in *The Works of Robert Boyle*, ed. Thomas Birch, 6 vols. (London, 1772, reprinted with an introduction by Douglas McKie, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965), 4:153. Subsequent references to Boyle's writings will be to this edition of *Works*.

truths. It is to Boyle's views on why it is reasonable to have faith to which I now turn.

Boyle knew that the seventeenth-century revival of Epicureanism invited charges of atheism and met the challenge head-on. Far from considering the new science to be a threat to religion, he argued those who practiced the new natural philosophy were in a far better position to appreciate the arguments of natural religion than were other people. The "virtuoso," who "understands and cultivates experimental philosophy," was in fact, he claimed, "such a one, as by attentively looking about him, gathers experience . . . on which he is disposed to make such reflections, as may (unforcedly) be applied to confirm and encrease in him the sentiments of natural religion, and facilitate his submission and adherence to the Christian religion." Although he noted that "perfunctory considerers in almost all ages and countries" have been led by a consideration of design in the universe to assent to the basic truths of natural religion, which are that God exists, that we can infer some of his attributes (including his general and special providence), and that the human soul is immortal, the assent of such "perfunctory considerers" is inferior to the assent given by the natural philosopher.¹⁵

Boyle thought that there were two ways in particular that the study of natural philosophy enhanced the naturalist's acceptance of the truths of natural religion. First, the naturalist studied final causes, and second, the naturalist learned to distinguish material from immaterial substances and hence could come to realize that body and mind cannot have the same essential attributes.¹⁶

Boyle's argument for the immortality of the soul from a knowledge of the nature of immaterial substance was fairly straightforward. He enumerated the faculties and functions of the rational soul (specifically, that the soul thinks, is conscious, can will, and so forth), from which the naturalist could infer that the rational soul is indivisible, and is by its very nature unlike body, which is divisible. The divisible body is perishable; therefore, since the soul is essentially unlike the body it does not perish with the body, and hence there must be an afterlife.¹⁷

¹⁵ Boyle, *The Christian Virtuoso*, 5:513–24; the quotations are from pp. 513, 524, and 516 respectively.

¹⁶ Boyle, *Christian Virtuoso*, 5:515–22.

¹⁷ Boyle, *Christian Virtuoso*, 5:517–18; *Things above Reason*, 4:423. The immateriality

Boyle's argument from final causes was considerably more complex. The details of his *Disquisition about the Final Causes of Natural Things* (1688) need not detain us here; I mention only the two things that are particularly relevant to my present concerns. First, the argument from final causes was Boyle's version of the well-known design argument commonly used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to prove God's existence and something about his nature. Although Boyle did not fail to note (as Newton put it in the *General Scholium* of the *Principia*, and far more succinctly than Boyle), that "it is not to be conceived that mere mechanical causes could give birth to so many regular motions" of the planets,¹⁸ his emphasis, unlike Newton's, was on the contrivance of the various parts of sublunary animals and humans in such a way as to further the good of the whole. When, for example, we study the anatomy of the eye, and study mathematics and the laws of optics, we cannot avoid concluding that it was designed by an "intelligent and designing agent," one who showed "admirable wisdom" and "providence."¹⁹

Second, even though in *Final Causes* Boyle was countering Descartes' banishing of final causality from the proper domain of science by arguing that human reason is capable of ascertaining *some* of God's ends in nature, he also emphasized reason's limits, repeatedly warning against the presumption that we, as humans, can infer from design all—or even most—of God's ends.²⁰ As he put it elsewhere, "the darkness that is here cast on all things" and "the dimness of our intellectual eyes" allow us to discern but little of God's "wisdom, power, and goodness" that is expressed in the creation.²¹ His main point was not the specific ends that might be ascertained, but the claim that God had placed his stamp on the world so that we would be led to admire and worship him, and seek to learn more about him.

of the soul provided Boyle with an argument for special providence, since God (in an act of special providence) must unite it to every particular embryo and maintain that union for as long as the body lives (*Christian Virtuoso*, 5:520).

¹⁸ Isaac Newton, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 2 vols., trans. Andrew Motte, rev. Florian Cajori (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1934), 2:544.

¹⁹ Boyle, *A Disquisition about the final Causes of natural Things*, 5:428 and 406.

²⁰ In stressing reason's limits in this context, Boyle was attempting to eliminate any inferences from the existence of natural and moral evil in the world to conclusions concerning God's attributes.

²¹ Boyle, *Some Motives and Incentives to the Love of God*, usually cited as *Seraphic Love*, 1:290.

Final causality also entered into Boyle's consideration of the soul's immortality, and it was the immortality of the soul that served as Boyle's "bridge" from natural to revealed religion. God would not have left man without the means to obtain the true end of his imperishable soul, and so man must wish for and seek a supernatural discovery of what God would have him believe and do in order to reach that end. Fortunately, there has been such a revelation, the Christian revelation.²² Before assenting to the propositions of revealed Christianity, however, Boyle thought that he must judge that it is *the* revelation, and here again reason entered the picture. He offered two reasons for accepting the Christian revelation. The first was the excellency of the doctrine. The second was that God had attested to its truth by performing miracles (including the miracle of its rapid spread, which had been prophesied). Boyle believed that it was rational to believe in miracles because even though they violate the uniformity of nature, they do not exceed the power of God (which is limited only by the law of non-contradiction) and for them we have the testimony of men of unimpeachable motives.

Having once accepted the legitimacy of the Christian revelation, Boyle believed that we must simply accept the revealed propositions as true without trying to justify them rationally. He thought that some of the propositions revealed in scripture enhance human understanding of the truths ascertainable by natural reason alone. For example, by studying God's judgments of particular historical acts as revealed in scripture, he thought that we can achieve both a better understanding of God's nature and of our hopes for an afterlife because we come to see that heaven is not reserved for saints alone. In addition, he thought that there are some propositions revealed in scripture that human reason could never have ascertained were it not for revelation, such as the revelation that there are angels.²³ These truths, like those that enhance the truths of natural religion, posed no problems for Boyle's conception of human understanding because our ideas of them are clear. There are other revealed truths, however, that Boyle thought posed insurmountable problems for human understanding.

²² Boyle, *Christian Virtuoso*, 5:222. The word "bridge" is Boyle's.

²³ Boyle, *The Excellency of Theology*, 4:7–9.

Section 4: Boyle and Reason's Limits

Boyle identified a third category of revealed propositions (or "privileged things") that he thought did pose problems for human understanding because even *after* they are accepted as articles of faith they remain impervious to reason for one or more of three (not mutually exclusive) reasons: They are incomprehensible (that is, we can form no clear and distinct notion of them), or they are "inexplicable" (that is, we cannot explain how it is that an attribute adheres to a subject, or how an effect is caused), or they are "unsociable" (in that the revealed truth is either self-contradictory or contradicts some other known truth).²⁴ Although not in themselves particularly significant, this last category of privileged things—the unsociable propositions—indicate the extreme limits that Boyle set on human understanding. For all practical purposes they violate the principle of noncontradiction, although strictly speaking Boyle avoided such a conclusion by insisting that although finite human reason cannot reconcile these contradictions, God in his infinite wisdom, understanding the harmony among all truths, is able to do so.²⁵

In his discussions of these "privileged things" Boyle repeatedly emphasized the limits of human reason and justified assent to incomprehensible, inexplicable, and unsociable revealed truths on the grounds that many matters of natural philosophy are equally incomprehensible and inexplicable, and appear, from the perspective of finite human reason, to involve inconsistencies.²⁶ Particularly relevant to our present concerns is the fact that most of the things that Boyle placed in the category of the inexplicable involve causation. Where these matters are concerned, he argued, human reason cannot conceive how it is that a cause can operate to bring about the perceived effect; in fact, not only is reason unable to ascertain the true *modus operandi*, but it is unable to produce any intelligible one.²⁷ Boyle pointed out that reason cannot understand, for example, how something can be made from nothing, or how soul can move body. These operations are not reducible to any of the ways agents with which

²⁴ Boyle, *Things above Reason*, 4:420 and 422–23; *Advices in Judging of Things said to Transcend Reason*, 4:453.

²⁵ Boyle, *Advices*, 4:466; *The Excellency of Theology*, 4:32.

²⁶ Boyle, *Things above Reason*, 4:412–13; *Appendix to The Christian Virtuoso*, 6:683, 693, and 711.

²⁷ Boyle, *Things above Reason*, 4:416; *Advices*, 4:453 and 455.

we are familiar work, and even where familiar agents (material objects) are concerned all that we can ascertain is the communication of local motion from one body to another. If we can accept the fact that even about familiar corporeal things “we know not the manner of operating, whereby several bodies perform what we well know they bring to pass,” there is no reason why we should have difficulty in believing in the inexplicable where God—a being “wholly unapproachable by our senses”—is concerned. In short, Boyle argued that a Christian ought not withhold assent from the truths of revelation simply because they are mysterious. After all, nature itself is filled with mysteries. If we acknowledge causality in the natural world (even though we do not understand it fully), we should also acknowledge supernatural causality (even though we do not understand it fully).

In Boyle’s opinion, human knowledge extends only as far as God intended.²⁸ He saw no reason why God, the author of the universe, “should, in his creating of things, have respect to the measure and ease of human understandings.”²⁹ Indeed, Boyle thought that God in his infinite wisdom had reserved a full understanding of the mysteries of both nature and theology for the afterlife, thereby providing a good incentive for those who wished to know these truths to embrace Christianity.³⁰

Section 5: Hume’s Attack on the Pillars of Natural Theology

From a logical point of view, given Boyle’s basing of revealed religion on natural religion and his claim that natural religion is more rationally assented to by those who understand final causes and the nature of substance than by those who do not, an attack on these twin foundations would go a long way toward toppling the entire superstructure. And in Book I of the *Treatise*, Hume systematically demolished the rationality of belief in these two foundations. Final

²⁸ Boyle, *Things above Reason*, 4:445. Boyle believed that when God created rational beings he deliberately limited their ability to reason; see Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and the Limits of Reason*, pp. 206–10.

²⁹ Boyle, *The Usefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy*, 2:46.

³⁰ See Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and the Limits of Reason*, pp. 210–11.

causes, of course, fell by the wayside in Hume's account of causation,³¹ and Hume explicitly noted this fact when he drew

some corollaries from [his analysis of causation], by which we may remove several prejudices and popular errors, that have very much prevail'd in philosophy. First, We may learn from the foregoing doctrine, that all causes are of the same kind, and that in particular there is no foundation for that distinction, which we sometimes make betwixt efficient causes, and causes *sine qua non*; or betwixt efficient causes, and formal, and material, and exemplary, and final causes. For as our idea of efficiency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects, wherever this is observ'd, the cause is efficient; and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind.³²

No longer would it be rational to argue from the order and design in the universe to an intelligent designer or from man's immortality to his destined end, the afterlife. Hume limited human understanding of causality to an account of how it is that we *believe* in causes and effects. Specifically, Hume excluded from our knowledge of causality any alleged powers, whether natural or supernatural.

Hume's attack on the immortality of the soul was two-pronged. First he attacked rational belief in substance in general, and in the belief that thought, or perceptions, or consciousness (that is, that the soul, if there be such) inheres in immaterial substance in particular (and by doing so, attacked the argument that the soul, because indivisible, is incompatible with extension, and since incompatible with extension, is non-perishable). In fact, Hume pointed out that *if* consciousness inheres in a substance at all, it is more likely to inhere in material substance on the grounds that we do have experience of a constant conjunction between matter in motion and thought and perception. Having already shown, however, that we have "no satisfactory notion of substance" (because we have no perfect idea of anything other than a perception, and a substance is entirely different from a perception), Hume "absolutely condemn[ed] even the question" of the materiality or immateriality of the soul.³³ "The question concerning the substance of the soul is absolutely unintelligible."³⁴

³¹ Certainly Hume's analysis of causation had targets other than these final causes; e.g., the occasionalism of Malebranche. I am not claiming that Boyle's thought was Hume's only target; simply that it was a significant one.

³² Hume, *Treatise*, p. 221.

³³ Hume, *Treatise*, p. 282.

³⁴ Hume, *Treatise*, p. 298.

The second prong of Hume's attack on the soul was his conclusions regarding personal identity. There must be "some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea," he claimed, and "self or person is not any one impression."³⁵ Hence, "the identity, which we ascribe to the mind of men, is only a fictitious one."³⁶ No longer could apologists such as Boyle claim a rational basis for believing in a self at all, much less a self destined to spend eternity in an afterlife.

In Book I of the *Treatise*, Hume destroyed the rational foundations of natural religion—final causes and the immateriality of the soul. Had he not excised "the nobler parts" (specifically, the section on miracles), his attack would have extended to the more particular justifications the Christian revelation in particular—the rationality of believing in miracles at all, the reliability of the testimony concerning miracles, and prophecy as a category of miracles.³⁷ In short, Hume deliberately and systematically demolished the pillars of natural theology on which a belief in revelation rested.

Section 6: Hume and Arguments concerning Reason's Limits

In Book I, however, Hume did more than destroy the rational foundations of belief. He went on to explain how it is that we *do* in fact believe in such things as cause and effect and a self *despite* our lack of rational grounds for doing so. Reading the *Treatise* in the light of Boyle's arguments on reason's limits can help us to understand that Hume's analysis of belief demolished the claims of those who had argued that we ought to believe that which we cannot comprehend. Were it not for such arguments, Hume might well have limited his attack on religion to an appeal to reason's limits; he might have limited himself to arguing that human reason is not competent to assess the alleged evidence of natural theology. Instead, he switched the entire arena of inquiry from the external world of objects (whether natural or supernatural) to the internal world of mind, and by doing so he eliminated the possibility of arguing from reason's limits to the truth of revelation.

³⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, p. 299.

³⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, p. 306.

³⁷ For arguments concerning miracles as justification for believing in the Christian revelation, see R. M. Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles: From Joseph Glanvill to David Hume* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1980).

To see how this is so, let me review briefly Hume's account of belief. According to Hume, among our ideas are some for which we have no corresponding impression, such as winged horses and golden mountains (and God). Further, he distinguished between memory and imagination. Memory must follow the same order and form as original impressions, but imagination has the liberty to transpose and change these impressions, and in doing so may produce just such fictitious fancies as winged horses (and miracles). In theory, memory is distinguished from the imagination because it is accompanied by more vivacity. According to Hume, an idea assented does (or ought to) feel differently from a fictitious idea of fancy in that it is distinguished by a "superior *force*, or *vivacity*, or *solidity* or *firmness* or *steadiness*."³⁸ Hume noted that "'tis impossible to explain perfectly this feeling . . . its true and proper name is *belief*. . . . [I]t is something *felt* by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination."³⁹ Yet, as Hume clearly recognized, we can come to believe fictitious ideas of fancy (as do liars who increase the vivacity of the fictions by constant repetition.⁴⁰ Hume's switching of the area of inquiry from the external to the internal world eliminated the possibility that individuals such as Boyle, who believe (for example) in the Trinity, could support such beliefs by appealing to reason's limits. Instead, such a believer can claim only that his or her idea of the Trinity is a particularly vivacious idea in his or her own mind. And the same holds true of all beliefs, including a belief in miracles or in the design argument.

And in fact, this was the exact move that Hume assigned to Cleanthes in the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. There Cleanthes, who was in the process of defending the design argument for God's existence, expressed clearly the vivacity of his belief:

Consider, anatomize the eye; survey its structure and contrivance, and tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not *immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation*.⁴¹

³⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, p. 146.

³⁹ Hume, *Treatise*, p. 146.

⁴⁰ Hume, *Treatise*, pp. 162–166. Two things that contribute to our believing in fictions are our propensity to believe the testimony of witnesses (p. 162) and the force of education (p. 166).

⁴¹ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Norman Kemp Smith, The Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis, 1947), p. 154 (emphasis added).

It is not surprising that immediately after Cleanthes delivers this impassioned plea, Pamphilus reports that "*Philo* was a little embarrassed and confounded."⁴² In a way clearly consistent with Hume's analysis of belief as a feeling in the *Treatise*, Cleanthes has just announced that he has a particularly forceful—a particularly vivacious, if you will—feeling where final causes (that is, the design argument) are concerned.

In short, I suggest that Hume's response to those who supported the rationality of believing in the content of revelation by arguing that it is reasonable to believe that human reason is incompetent to judge its content was to express a radical scepticism concerning the existence of anything external to mind and to declare the only proper area of philosophical inquiry to be the contents and functions of the mind. The fact that this move demolished the claim that it is rational to believe that which one does not understand, however, is not enough to show that it was in fact the move that Hume made. Nevertheless, the *Treatise* is notoriously difficult to interpret. If we accept the view that the *Treatise* was part and parcel of Hume's comprehensive attack on the religion of his day (and we ought not to forget that he announced in the Introduction that "these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion, as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them"),⁴³ then the interpretation of Hume as a radical sceptic regarding the existence of the external world increases in plausibility.

That Hume did not explicitly address the issue of things above reason in his published works should not be a barrier against reading the *Treatise* in that context. In the seventeenth century, those who held views such as Boyle's were accused by contemporaries of being enthusiasts, and Hume certainly made a number of references to enthusiasm.⁴⁴ Further, there is considerable evidence that Hume

⁴² Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, p. 155.

⁴³ Hume, *Treatise*, Introduction, p. xv.

⁴⁴ More properly, Hume would have referred to a position such as Boyle's as "superstition," not "enthusiasm." See, for example, his unpublished preface to Volume II, *History of England*, quoted in full in Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, pp. 306–7. See also his reference to the "craft of popular superstitions, which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these entangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness" in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg

was familiar with Boyle's works, as well as the works of others who held positions such as Boyle's.

It is important not to underestimate the influence of Boyle's thought on subsequent thinkers. In addition to the numerous reprint editions of his individual works,⁴⁵ collections of his works were being published throughout eighteenth century (and beyond), many of which contained introductory essays in which Boyle's arguments were presented in brief.⁴⁶

Michael Barfoot provided further evidence of Boyle's widespread influence when he recently discovered the Physiological Library founded in 1724 by Robert Steuart, Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. David Hume's name appears in the Catalogue of this Library in a list of students who joined the library in December, 1724. In the Catalogue (which might be considered something of a recommended reading-list for students), there were (by far) more works by Boyle than by any other author—forty-two, plus various papers that had been published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of London; this is slightly over *ten percent* of the total number of works listed. Boyle's works are listed first, and are the only works that are listed trans-categorically; that is, the rest of the Catalogue is divided into subjects, whereas Boyle's works in various aspects of natural history and natural philosophy and his theological writings are all listed together. As Barfoot put it, "clearly the works of Boyle were being canvassed and popularized in a major way."⁴⁷

It seems likely, then, that Hume was in fact familiar with Boyle's thought on the limits of reason, although there is no record of which, if any, of the works in the library Hume might have read or borrowed. There is, additionally, an oblique record of the fact that Hume was aware of the way in which the argument concerning

(Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), p. 5. For the relationship of Boyle to enthusiasm, see Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and the Limits of Reason*, pp. 108–13.

⁴⁵ See, for example, entries for Boyle in the *British Library Catalogue (to 1975)*; John F. Fulton, *A Bibliography of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Fellow of the Royal Society*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

⁴⁶ For example: *The Theological Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.; epitomiz'd . . . by Richard Boulton* (London, 1715).

⁴⁷ Michael Barfoot, "Hume and the Culture of Science in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M. A. Stewart, Oxford Studies in the History of Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 159–60.

"things above reason" had been used by Boyle and others. There is an entry in his early memoranda which reads "Contrary to Reason; above Reason. Human Reason: Divine Reason. Id."⁴⁸ The "Id." refers back to a passage in "Baile," a passage in which Pierre Bayle attacks arguments similar to Boyle's concerning things above reason.⁴⁹

Section 7: Conclusion

Hume has been portrayed as a sceptical realist by such authors as John Wright and David Raynor.⁵⁰ Boyle, I suggest, is a sceptical realist. Boyle never doubted the existence of both a natural and supernatural external world, but he had a strong conviction that human understanding is unable to comprehend the many mysteries in both worlds. Further, he claimed that the fact that there are mysteries in the natural world provided reason to accept on faith the mysteries of the supernatural world. Because Boyle (and others) had relied on arguments for reason's limits to provide a defense of Christianity, Hume could not destroy the rationality of religious belief *solely* by claiming that human reason is incapable of comprehending religious truths and the truths of natural theology on which a belief in revelation rested. Instead, he shifted the entire area of philosophical enquiry away from questions regarding the external world (whether natural or supernatural), expressing a radical scepticism about the very existence of any world external to mind, and limiting the proper area of philosophical enquiry to an analysis of how it is that we come to have beliefs about the external world.

⁴⁸ "Hume's Early Memoranda, 1729–1740: The Complete Text," ed. Ernest Campbell Mossner, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 9 (1948), p. 502.

⁴⁹ J. P. Pittion, "Hume's Reading of Bayle: An Inquiry into the Source and Role of the Memoranda," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (Oct., 1977), p. 375. Pittion has traced the reference to a passage appearing in Bayle's *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial*, part II, chapter CLIX where, in Pittion's words:

Bayle is exploding the distinction used by contemporary rationalist theologians to account for such "illogical" dogmas as that of the Trinity. Mysteries of faith, they claimed, are "above" but not "contrary to" reason. Bayle argues that the distinction is based on an ambiguity: if by reason is meant "divine" or "universal reason," then mysteries of faith are neither above nor contrary to reason; if "human reason," is meant, then they are indeed contrary to it.

This quite accurately characterizes Boyle's discussion of "things above reason"; Boyle's insistence that no revealed truths are *genuinely* contrary to reason is indeed based on the argument that "by reason is meant 'divine' or 'universal reason.'"

⁵⁰ Wright, *The Sceptical Realism of David Hume*; David Raynor, "Hume and Berkeley's *Three Dialogues*," in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 231–50.